

# THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE STATE

*Their Relationship historically considered  
with some of its Bearings on the Future  
of Civilisation*

BY THE

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To M. E. M.

THIS BOOK IS PRODUCED IN  
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## P R E F A C E

A THINKER on the relationships of the individual and the State seeks to explain what conceptions led our fathers to fashion their multifarious laws and institutions, bearing both on them and the future of civilisation affected by them. To be ephemeral is the destiny of human thought and action. Man cannot command the stars to stand still as Joshua did over Ajalon. We learn truth, as we eat our bread, each day anew, and in the pursuit of it history and science are merely the mirror of life. The historian may, like my revered professor, J. B. Bury, aspire to regard a period of time *sub specie perennitatis*, but he always writes *sub specie temporis*. I can discern no homogeneity among the past relationships of the individual and the State, for the essence of man and of human affairs is their endless variety and capacity for change. The experience of mankind has been almost infinite and the content of history is accordingly inexhaustible. The analysis of the forces at work compels me in this manifold experience to travel along by-ways, provided they lead to the main road, and the nearer I come to our own day the more I discern the necessity of walking along many by-ways in order to understand how they at last arrive at the chief highway.

I can conceive no security in any survey of the tie between the individual and the State not founded on a profound sense of the dependence of the present upon the past, even what seems to be the remote past; and the just answer to Rousseau's fancy that man is born free is that he is born thousands of years old and is anything but free. The late Ambassador Page used to say of the southern United States that it is "governed from the grave." In a serious sense the whole world, certainly the English world, is "governed from the grave." We are not ourselves alone but others as well, not merely the living but also the dead, without whom we labour in vain. History bridges time and space: it helps us to answer the question who is our neighbour, to get and keep in touch, and to acquire that sense of contact and community without which we lose our bearings and drift or are driven about by every turning tide and gust of feeling. History is in truth a church in which the living encounters the memorials, if not the spirits, of the past, and it is the baptismal font of the future. The past is not less moving than the future, and it beckons us out of our temporal vision into an enlarged sphere of sympathy and imagination.

May I say that I have had charge of three different types of parishes, the small country, the large country, and the city type? I have been chairman as well as member of non-ecclesiastical as well as ecclesiastical bodies, and from them I gained a wider—as well as, I hope, a wiser—attitude to many practical problems. I have also been President of a Working Man's Club, and I certainly learnt much from its members. It is a school of experience that still moves me to gratitude.

## PREFACE

The following publishers generously allowed me to use extracts from books published by them, and I desire to thank them most cordially: Messrs. Benn (my *Political Consequences of the Reformation*) and Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton (my *Group Movements throughout the Ages*).

Dr. G. P. Gooch was good enough to read my manuscript, and I am deeper in his debt than ever. From college days onwards I am grateful to Professor W. T. Stace for our philosophical talks. To discharge my obligations to a critic, who prefers to be anonymous, is beyond my power. These three friends are not necessarily in agreement with my conclusions.

GROVE HOUSE,  
THE ICKNIELD WAY,  
GORING-ON-THAMES.

ROBERT H. MURRAY.

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	viii
<i>Chapter</i>	
I THE GREEK CONCEPTION OF THE STATE . . . . .	11
II THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE FOURTH CENTURY . . . . .	25
III THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY IN LAW AND LIFE . . . . .	53
IV MACHIAVELLI AND LUTHER . . . . .	73
V PROGRESS AND REVOLUTION . . . . .	102
VI GERMAN CONCEPTIONS OF THE STATE . . . . .	130
VII NIETZSCHE AND THE SUPERMAN . . . . .	154
VIII HITLER AND TOTALITARIANISM . . . . .	175
IX PRIVATE AND PUBLIC MORALITY . . . . .	204
X THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE STATE . . . . .	222

## INTRODUCTION

AT the present moment there is no more vital subject than the relationship of the individual to the community, whether State or Church. It is one of the questions that is dominating our thoughts. We see that the individual is increasingly set over against the State, which is seeking to master him. But is it not his task to understand it, to appropriate its life? His is not the task of mastering it but of co-operating with it. Clearly he must be at liberty to pursue this work of co-operation. How is his liberty to be prevented from degenerating into the licence that destroys the State or the Church? In answering this question the individual realises that he is no mere self-subsistent entity which the community brings into harmonious relationship with another individual. For the isolated individual is the sheer abstraction Burke demonstrated him to be. Simon Stylites spells the dissolution of society. How are we to achieve his unity with the State or the Church? It is plain that we cannot achieve it in a common outlook, in the cherishing of common ideals, in devotion to common ends. These certainly create genuine bonds. But do they not raise illusory hopes by thrusting to the one side the deep-seated differences between man and man? Can we eliminate these differences? Can we bring others into agreement with one's own angle of approach? Evidently we cannot, and if we could we should simply create an individual, solitary world. The way to create a community does not lie in the reconciliation of the desires and caprices of man. Our aim surely is the eager endurance of the contradiction and the joyful acceptance of the continuous tension between two or more opposed points of view, each of which renounces the claim to be absolute. Unity in the deep sense can only be found in the devotion of man to an end beyond himself.

If we glance at the competing ideals there is the Marxist surrender to the classless society which inaugurates classes in another form—Stalin is the Tzar transformed, or the German National-Socialist claim which exorcises the demon of private gain only to exchange it for public gain. We turn from these to approach the Divine Commonwealth which consists of a human society based on the laws of God, on the one abiding reality, the duty of man to God, of one to another. The growth of free yet dependent personality is the goal of life. The test which examines the quality of all human institutions is the respect paid to the human dignity of man. The claim of this book is that man is a moral being or he is nothing. He possesses the right to mental and spiritual development: others possess precisely the same right to theirs. He claims to be treated as free, treated as equal in the eyes of the law, and treated justly: others have precisely the same claims. The cement which holds society together is the general acceptance of certain assumptions of what is bad or good, just or unjust. If these assumptions are

fundamentally based on goodness and justice, the State or the Church has a permanent foundation; if not, it has none. Moral obligation controls and guides all that it does. Unless the State or the Church is so inspired and controlled, it is in the long run doomed to decay. No doubt this is idealism, but our contention is that the idealist is man's best friend, and he does most for the race who purges its spiritual vision, and breathes religion into cold duty till it becomes transformed into a thing of passion and power, pulsating with life. In truth, society cannot exist without a common faith and a common purpose.

Religion is its inspiring principle, politics its application. Without heartfelt and vitalising religion there can be no true community. For the needs of the Church or the State are at least as much spiritual as intellectual or material. The education of humanity grows like the Scots' cairn to which each member of the clan adds his stone. The Greek of the fourth century B.C., the Roman of the fourth century A.D., the lawyer and the friar of the thirteenth, the reformer of the sixteenth, the advocates of progress and revolution of the eighteenth, the believers in *laissez-faire* of the nineteenth, the German thinkers on the functions of the State of the early nineteenth, a Nietzsche and the superman of the end of the nineteenth, a Hitler and the Totalitarianism of the twentieth—all enrich the cairn, though in competing as often as completing fashions. We in our turn pass by, the travellers of a day, called away to continue our individualism and our corporateness elsewhere.

What is the ultimate ground, the guarantee, of free and independent personality against the claims of the State? It is religion, based on Christian freedom, which is essentially inner. The Reformation performed outstanding service in vindicating the place of this freedom, which gladly accepts the obligation to seek the good of other men as the means of realising the higher freedom in and through relations with other persons. It reveals itself not in the isolation of the individual but in his union with others through brotherly love in Christ. It meets man from within as he shakes off his self-centredness. It meets him from without as Divine love compels him to realise that the core of his life is not in himself but in one who cares for him, God. There is no greater task lying before the Church than to testify to this freedom and to manifest itself in the lives of its members. Its long history enables it to grasp firmly the fact that no outward measures can bind the conscience of man or make him inwardly free. Such freedom can only proceed from a change of heart and head.

Has history a centre, a reality, imparting to the life of man a commanding meaning? Christianity supplies such a centre in the love of God revealed in Christ. It maintains a human fellowship, rooted in God's care for men. Where love is lacking, the individual sacrifices himself to the community or the community sacrifices him to its own ends. This lack of love issues in anarchical individualism or the totalitarian State. Christian love restores the lost sense of community. The Franciscans found it for a while, but they failed to give it a permanent

The State of Plato and Aristotle has as its mission the positive furtherance of goodness. Though they did not forget the indicative mood, they wrote their conceptions in the imperative. Political philosophy was to them at least as much an art as a science. They realised, to use the words of the *Republic* that "States do not come out of an oak or a rock, but from the characters of the men that dwell therein." They realised that the citizens of a democracy received wages for political services rendered, which was legitimate, but they also realised that these citizens sometimes proceeded to pillage the rich, which was illegitimate. In spite of failings, both thought that there was in human nature a certain imperfect presence of God, and that it was this divine presence alone which transformed it into true human nature. The State of both is a Church and a political institution, and it never occurred to them that the State was "profane." The Greek religion had no creed and no dogma, save perhaps the writings of Hesiod; it had plenty of priests, but no episcopate. As is the body to the soul, so is the State to justice, the ideal of perfection in human relationships. There was equality in the law courts. Equal law and equal speech are two names for the self-same thing, democracy. To Plato and Aristotle the same word serves for goodness and law-abidingness, for the virtue of the man and for the virtue of the citizen. Both contrast abstract justice and rightful laws with the actual laws and customs that prevail all around them. Behind the latter they discern a pervasive law, and it is the law of nature, bestowed upon civilised beings. Law is reason, free from human prejudice and free from human passion, and so much is this the case that Freeman saw in Athens the first instance the world ever witnessed of the substitution of force by law.

In the eyes of Plato and Aristotle, the State is large enough to be a self-sufficing city, and yet not too large to allow a unity of interest and of feeling among its members. For they conceive that the individual is not a complete moral being. He needs what others have to give, and they what he has to bestow. The citizen is the city. Each one can say, *L'état, c'est moi*. Wholeheartedly would they have subscribed to the view of Edmund Burke when he laid down that "*Idem sentire de republica* was with them a principal ground of forming firmer, dearer, more pleasing, more honourable, and more virtuous habitudes." Fellowship in Athens meant all that citizenship could bestow upon the individual, the citizenship developed by common needs and common intercourse in market-places where men met, and in shrines and temples where they worshipped. Herodotus sees the bond of the Hellenic race in "one blood, one tongue, the common temples of the gods, the common sacrifices, the manners of life which are the same for all."

In an oration of undying eloquence, which is of the same order as Abraham Lincoln's masterpiece at Gettysburg, Pericles pronounces in 431 B.C., in the presence of a community more civilised than our own, the funeral panegyric of those fallen in the Peloponnesian war. He describes the bravery and the ability of his fellow citizens, proudly claiming that "the individual Athenian in his person seems to have the

power of adapting himself to the most varied forms of action with the utmost versatility and grace." In truth, "I would have you day by day fix your eyes upon the greatness of Athens, until you become filled with the love of her; and when you are impressed by the spectacle of her glory, reflect that this empire has been acquired by men who knew their duty and had the courage to do it, who in the hour of conflict had the fear of dishonour always present to them, and who, if ever they failed in an enterprise, would not allow their virtues to be lost to their country, but freely gave their lives to her as the fairest offering which they could present at her feast. The sacrifice which they collectively made was individually repaid to them; for they received again and again each one for himself a praise which grows not old and the noblest of all sepulchres. I speak not of that in which their glory survives and is proclaimed always and on every fitting occasion both in word and deed. For the whole earth is the sepulchre of famous men; not only are they commemorated by columns and inscriptions in their own country, but in foreign lands there dwells also an unwritten memorial of them graven not on stone but in the hearts of men. Make them your examples." His ideal is, in Nestle's phrase, *die Ausbildung und Geltendmachung der Individualität*, the development of individuality, rendering it available.

The inspiration of the life indicated by the words of Pericles is to be found in the writings of Plato, and a philosophy like his—for a time, at least—gradually converted the soul of the Greek to the service of his State. Plato believes with all his might that the ideal of the good is the ideal of the citizen. In the beautiful myth which he puts into the mouth of Protagoras, he describes how to the first city dwellers, who were ignorant of "the art of city life," Zeus sent down Hermes, "bearing in his hands Reverence and Justice to be the ordering principles of cities and the bonds of friendship and conciliation." To Plato it is clear that "the love of man rises as upon stepping-stones from beautiful bodies to beautiful institutions and from beautiful institutions to beautiful ideas, and from beautiful ideas it attains to the idea of beauty and at last knows what the essence of beauty is; this, my dear Socrates, is the life of all others which man should live." Did such a city with such an ideal exist, even in Athens? Plato supplies us with his answer. "The city is founded in words; for on earth I imagine it nowhere exists." Perhaps, he adds, it is laid up in heaven, as an example to him who wishes to see, and, seeing, to establish his life accordingly. To Plato virtue in the State is identical with virtue in the individual. Men like Machiavelli were one day to teach that there is a double standard of morality, one for the State and another for the individual. But our philosopher will have none of this doctrine. He knows that the absence of morality in inter-State relations means in the last resort the absence of morality in all relations, private as well as public. We are not at all sure that, in spite of his device of the superman, Nietzsche does not deserve well of all friends of humanity, for he demonstrated with outspoken frankness that in the sphere of private life ideals cannot permanently remain different from those of public.

(2) *Military Monasticism*

The ideal of Plato never formally existed any more than the ideal of Sir Thomas More. The people who create Utopias are well aware that, to quote More, "there are many things in the Utopian commonwealth which it is easier to wish for in our own states than to have any hope of seeing them realised." They are equally aware that without their visions the people perish, and that prophets like themselves are the very men who supply the motive power of society. Of the existence of this permeating idealism Plato entertains no doubt whatever. His city is built of dreams

therefore never built at all,  
And therefore built for ever;

and hence he can say of his city that "it is no matter, whether it exists or ever will exist." His inquiry he pursues for the sake of the ideal, and not with a view of proving that it can exist in fact. Practice inevitably must fall far short of theory just as action must lag behind thought. Nevertheless, our thoughts can think away the conditions of time, and our minds can construct a picture of the world of the eternal as it would be if the true principles of human life had free play. How deeply this dream-city of Plato influenced men, let the whole history of the Middle Ages attest. Platonic principles, as Nettleship used to expound, show that a man's happiness consists in doing his work as well as he can, it seems to the seer to follow that we should make it as hard as possible for the individual to do otherwise. Therefore these young individuals, when they enter public life, are to possess no inducements to neglect the public weal; they are to have no house, land, or money of their own, but to live under a kind of military monasticism. The theory of medieval monasticism might in effect be expressed thus: You are going to serve God; let the external organisation of your life express that service; do without everything that is not vital to the service of God. Plato's theory is the same, with the substitution of the service of the State for the service of God. Both theories hold in common the belief that much can be done for human character by depriving men of material means for doing wrong, and by compelling them to live externally an ordered existence. The question, however, is bound to arise sooner or later. Can you entirely mechanise the service of the individual in the interests of either State or Church?

To Plato and Aristotle the State is a living, and therefore organised, being. Just as a statue is something more than a collection of marble particles, just as a man is something more than a mere matter of cells and corpuscles, so the State is more than the sum of its citizens. As Plato knows that Glaucon holds the social contract conception of the relationship of the State to its citizens, so Aristotle knows that Lycophron also holds it, and both philosophers resolutely turn away in abhorrence from this mechanical notion. Neither of them actually employs the



phrase social organism, but both believe in this idea. For the State is no mere alliance which the individual can join or leave as the whim seizes him. It is a moral and spiritual organism fitted to absorb the feelings and thoughts of the citizens, of giving voice to them in law—law is the cement of the City-State—and realising them in acts. For the honour and glory of the Commonwealth its members are eager to discharge their duties, caring but little for their rights. The whole idea of the City-State would be inconceivable, and intense devotion to it could not exist, if it did not possess this high moral and spiritual character. Nor is it unreasonable to discern Platonism in the Roman Empire, the Reformation, the French Revolution—combined with the Russian, Italian, and German Revolutions of our own generation—for all alike install the State in its classical position as the sole organism to whose majesty all other organisms must yield their pride of place.

The Medieval Church wore a corporate character, and this provided one reason for the attacks of Machiavelli as well as those of Luther. "The Republic one and indivisible" of Robespierre could brook no rivals any more than Stalin, Mussolini, and Hitler. Unity is the very breath of Plato's nostrils, as it is the breath of theirs. To him "there is no greater good than whatsoever binds the State together into one." Religion performs this high office, and he accordingly advocates the punishment of death for the offence of religious unbelief, as such unbelief undermines the foundations of the Commonwealth itself. True, there were phratries, there were tribes, in Greece, but Plato discreetly closes his eyes to their existence. The State is paramount, and the individual, like the associations, exists simply to serve it. The Spencerian view of The Man versus the State was an inconceivable idea. If any man is an invalid, the sooner he dies the better. To-day we maintain that the strong should bear the burdens of the weak. Plato sternly refused to argue in this fashion, for to him invalids and their like constituted "drones," who formed the curse of the organic State. They could not contribute to its life as a healthy individual could. Such an individual is so bound up with the welfare of the State that his individuality ceases any longer to exist. Is such a complete blending possible? Aristotle believes that it is quite impossible, for "the unity of the State, which he (i.e., Plato) commands above all things, would be like what is mentioned by Aristophanes in the *Symposium*, when he speaks of lovers, in the excess of their affection desiring to grow together and to become one instead of two, in which event one or both must necessarily perish." He divines that the Platonic unity cannot survive the growth of conscious individualism.

### (3) Greek Cosmopolitanism

The unity of the State means at bottom the unity of its thinkers. Thought, however, is continually changing: it changed in fifth century Athens. Science was working its wonders. Did not Empedocles explain the development of the universe by the forces of attraction and repulsion?

Did not Democritus shadow forth the atomic theory which Lucretius was one day to turn into great poetry? Empedocles and Democritus bestowed an impetus on the spirit of inquiry abroad, which soon reached political science. The truth or the falsehood of this spirit matters little; what does matter is its presence. The sophists, the professors of the fifth century, met the demand of the investigator by the genuine knowledge they bestowed on all manner of subjects. Sophists then meant specialists, and it is sufficient to say that they numbered in their ranks Gorgias, Hippias, Prodicus, Protagoras, and Socrates. The fame of the last two has gone to the ends of the world. Both of them suffered the persecution so often the fate of the original mind. Socrates taught men to reason methodically, and his method is now part and parcel of the mental furniture of all thinkers. His critical questioning proved him the apostle of individualism, but he directed it destructively, and, wittingly or unwittingly, he gradually weakened the local patriotism that Athens had long inspired. This new individualism emerges in many fashions. Take art. Among the thousands of vases now filling museum shelves, no two painted alike exist. "With the Greeks," remarks Marquardt, "every handicraft was an art: with the Romans every art was a handicraft." "Mint your own coins"—your independence, your thinking—was the motto of the Greek Cynic philosopher. Sophist and artist realised their individuality which also emerges in the open attitude of the Greek to women. If Aristophanes ridicules women's rights in his *Parliament of Women*, Euripides's *Hippolytus*, his *Heracleidae* and *Medea*, and the defiance of the *Bacchae* compel us to listen to his plea on behalf of suffering women. Antigone and Electra, whose name means "the Unmated," help us to feel the tragic loneliness in the eyes of Sophocles, a true son of Athens, of any woman who aspired to independence. Who can measure the price Greece paid for not training her women to rise to the level of her men?

Scientists, sophists, and dramatists were assisting in the transformation of the spirit of Athens. Formerly she used to be local whereas she was turning cosmopolitan. She was becoming Hellenic as well as Athenian. Increasingly this is obvious in the world of religion. The religious ideas of Hellas were individualistic. For they received no sanction from the organised opinion of a State or a Church. The establishment of foreign cults at Athens eloquently testified to the new cosmopolitanism. Behind these was manifest the desire to perceive what elements they enjoyed in common. The worship of nature was one such element, an element realised at all times. Who that ever heard them can forget the beautiful words addressed by the farmer's wife, who shared Mme. de Créquy's room in the prison of the Luxembourg, to the Republican who told her that the belfry of her village was being taken down that the people might have nothing by which to recollect their former superstitions? "You must at least leave us the stars," she replied, "and they are older than any belfry." The great feelings of the world do not pass like its glory. One Athenian might gaze at one star, another at another. He might, in a word, regard his beloved city no longer through its ethos, but through

his own eyes. The social organism could no longer demand from him the unquestioning obedience that had characterised his forefathers. Plato perceived this new spirit, and acutely realised the danger that it might threaten to his Commonwealth. "The horses and asses," he writes, "have a way of marching along with all the rights and dignities of freemen; and they will run at anybody whom they meet in the street if he does not leave the road clear for them: and all things are just ready to burst with liberty."

Sparta, like Venice, might avoid constitutional change with especial care, but—in spite of or on account of her stabilisation—she seems always to sink into the decay of apathy. On the other hand if Athens bursts with liberty, her outbreaks are sudden and frequent, the price of individualism. Athens, like Florence and the France of the eighteenth century, rapidly exhausts herself. Insistence on continuity is the first necessity for the life of the State. All the long-lived States, like Venice, have been exceedingly tenacious of established laws and customs. But such States are apt to purchase their longevity at the price of activity, beauty, and originality. "Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay," was the saying of one of the poets who have best understood politics and was anything but a revolutionary. And many would argue that two stormy centuries of Florence much more than outweigh for humanity all the thousand ordered years of the Venetian republic, and that the century or century and a half of Athens, which carries us from Æschylus to Demosthenes, is worth a hundred whole histories of Sparta, in which there is little besides Leonidas (with the help too of one of the noblest of the poets whom Athens inspired and sheltered) that can very greatly move us. Yet perhaps it is chiefly the business of the other arts to adorn the life of the State, but of the political art to preserve it. And while the ultra-conservative States of China and Venice, the moderately conservative Rome and England, have lived to a very great age, Athens and Florence faced brief and troubled lives. Stability is probably the most important of all elements of political strength. The political restlessness of Athens and Florence, one may add the Paris of the eighteenth century, was in each case followed by, and was probably the cause of, the loss of freedom at home and of power abroad.

The political restlessness of Athens aroused serious concern in Plato. Idealist as he is, still, like Aristotle, he is a practical idealist. His *Republic* is much more than a city of nowhere. Lurking in its background, we meet the science, the sophism, and the drama of his generation. In the foreground we meet the conditions prevailing in places like Athens, Sparta and Syracuse, for Plato is as practical as Aristotle who based his theories on researches into a hundred and fifty-eight Greek constitutions. These conditions demand a high level of intelligence. Plato realises so thoroughly the need of this level on the part of the inquiring individual—if he is to take his share in the Commonwealth—that Rousseau actually maintains that "the *Republic* is not a work upon politics, but the finest treatise on education that ever was written." How is the individual to harmonise his interests with those

of the States? The answer is that in serving his own ends he secures those of his fellows. "He will have a larger growth, and be the saviour of his country as well as of himself." How can the spirit of division or faction, or stasis, actuate men if they realise the organic nature of the State and the functions of each of its members? Unhappily a rift grew up between the Platonic conception of the relationship of the individual to the Commonwealth and that relationship as it existed in Athens. For there is nothing more certain than that stasis constituted its cardinal weakness. Thucydides diagnoses this factious spirit in unforgettable language. "The cause of all these evils was the love of power, originating in avarice and ambition, and the party-spirit which is engendered in them when men are fairly embarked in a contest. For the leaders on either side used specious names; the one party professing to uphold the constitutional equality of the many, the other the wisdom of an aristocracy, while they made the public interests, to which in name only they were devoted, in reality their prize. Striving in every way to overcome each other, they committed the most monstrous crimes; yet even these were surpassed by the magnitude of their revenges, which they pursued to the very uttermost, neither party observing any definite limits either of justice or public expediency, but both alike making the caprice of the moment their law. Either by the help of an unrighteous sentence, or grasping power with the strong hand, they were eager to satiate the impatience of the party-spirit. . . . And the citizens who were of neither party fell a prey to both; either they were disliked because they held aloof, or men were jealous of their surviving."

#### (4) *Platonic Communism*

There is always a gulf between the ideal and the real, but who can span the gulf between the ideal of Plato and the real of Thucydides? Where is the highest life, the one in which the individual renders and receives justice? Where is the concord and harmony of his desires with those of others which will achieve justice in the State? It is no matter of surprise that Plato advocates communism, the emancipation of women, and the widening of the basis of art, and advocates all three in the hope of turning the ideal into the real. Communism to him harmonises in their innermost nature the desires of all, for it disposes of all impediments standing in the way of the highest and the most enthusiastic service of the State. His communism, however, has nothing to do with the evils of poverty. It applies to one class only, and that the highest in the Commonwealth. He turns to women. What Aristophanes had felt for their position in the *Clouds* in one way, and Euripides in the *Medea* in another, Plato also felt, and he continued to reflect that he must remodel society by the abolition of the family, and that then women ought to come into their own. The home in Sparta, like the home of Plato, exhibited no genuine existence when real marital communion between husband and wife was forbidden,

and when children left their parents as soon as infancy was over. With Plato the State inevitably took precedence over the family, for were not the interests of the home prone to render the unselfish selfish? Youth needs great poetry, for its tales of famous men and famous deeds inspire it. Youth too needs gymnastics to render the body fit minister of a virtuous mind. Finally, youth demands music and art, for the harmonies and the rhythm of the former combined with the paintings and sculpture of the latter prepare it for noble deeds. If the poetry and gymnastics, the music and art of the day are all free from revolutionary tendencies, then the Commonwealth remains in sound condition. With Luther and Fletcher of Saltoun—and, we may add, with all the heads of Totalitarian States—Plato realises that the ballads of a country are more far-reaching than its laws. In a word, there is a real *esprit de corps*, and this is one thing that genuinely matters. He has already insisted that there is a real *esprit des lois*—does he not maintain that the citizens are the “slaves” of the law?—and this is another thing that genuinely matters. Aristotle points out that the worst fault of an extreme democracy is its lawlessness, that is, the reign of arbitrary will. True democracy, he insists, is the reign of law. Nevertheless Sir Henry Maine maintains—and rightly maintains—that “neither the Greeks nor any society speaking and thinking their language ever showed the smallest capacity for producing a philosophy of law.” That was the high office of Rome.

Slaves there were of another order. Of the total population of Athens the slaves in the fifth century number 80,000, while the citizens and their families run to perhaps half that number. The judgment of Aristotle is as clear cut as that of a Southern planter. With an imperfect conception of human personality he staunchly believes that “the lowest sort of mankind are by nature slaves, and it is better for them, as for all inferiors, that they should be under the rule of a master. For he who can be, and therefore is, the property of another, and he who participates in reason enough to apprehend, but not to have reason, is a slave by nature.” It is true, no doubt, that the 80,000 slaves were treated with not a little consideration, yet the literature of Greece rings, and rightly, with the pathos of the lot of these lowly men. Slave labour is the common cancer of all the Greek States. Most of the slaves were barbarians, and we know how the Greek regarded the barbarian. Still some of them came to possess money with which they might purchase their freedom. Others came in time to be regarded as distinctly more than living machines, labouring for the benefit of their masters. On the whole, then, it is unjust to view the City of the Violet Crown as one whose foundations reposed fundamentally on the labour of the slave—at least in the modern sense of the term. Take an instance. A leading banker, who had once been a slave, emancipated his chief clerk, leaving him by will his business and his widow. Slavery, of the Roman or American variety, records nothing similar. No negro slave in New York or New Orleans inherited his master’s widow and his master’s bank.

Slavery with Aristotle is an institution of society. Like some intellectuals he felt an un-Greeklike contempt for manual and industrial labour. It is easy for our Stagirite to mark off the beasts from men, but how are we to mark off slaves from them? Just as Shylock showed that the Jew resembles other men, so does the slave. Aristotle searches for outward and visible differences between slaves and men, and of course he finds them. Slaves clearly are barbarians. Have they the erect bearing which the freeman gains from the gymnasia and arms, forbidden to the unfree? Aristotle was unfortunate in the circumstance that the slaves of his fellow citizens were not negroes, for then he might have said in earnest, what Montesquieu did in irony, about the impossibility of supposing that God had meant to bestow freedom upon beings with such ill-shaped noses. In the opinion of Dryden:

The longest tyranny that ever swayed  
Was that wherein our ancestors betrayed  
Their free-born reason to the Stagirite,  
And made his torch their universal light.

In all that concerns the commercial aspects of life these lines are only too true. Under the influence of Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas (c. 1227-74) maintains that slavery, though unnatural before the fall of man, is rather an addition to, than a departure from, the law of nature. Ægidius Rómanus, a pupil of St. Thomas Aquinas, reasons thus: Man has fallen from the liberty he possessed in Paradise, has lost the right to belong to himself, and is thus naturally liable to be made a slave. From the fourth century B.C. to the year 1860 is a long interval, and yet the American Civil War is at bottom a revolt, an armed revolt, against the opinions of the Stagirite.

#### (5) *A Great State*

Plato was as fundamentally radical as Aristotle was conservative. The latter is pre-eminently the parent of philosophic conservatism. The "divine right of things as they are" made scanty appeal to Plato, whereas to Aristotle it proved potent. He disbelieved in continuous progress, a disbelief unshared by Plato who nevertheless is wellnigh hopeless in his outlook for the mass of men. Plato soars to heaven: Aristotle treads firmly on mother earth. He provides a *raison d'être* for the family and for slavery, and he seeks the preventive path in his desire to heal diseases, stasis or slavery, of the body politic. "Man is by nature," so runs his famous phrase, "a political being." "The State comes into existence," so runs another of his famous phrases, "for the sake of mere life, but exists for the good life." The member of it finds himself in the citizenship of the Commonwealth which forms the institution realising his complete self. He attains more than fullness of life, for he attains life itself. Because the individual is not self-sufficing without the State, Aristotle assumes that he stands to it in the relation of an organ to the body, and

the dependence of the citizen upon the Commonwealth is every whit as fundamental as that of the organ on the body. The essential outlook, accordingly, of Plato and Aristotle is the same. Plato is a man in an aeroplane who flies over the new land, catching through the clouds its contours. Aristotle is the engineer who goes there and builds the new roads. He was clear-sighted though not far-sighted. He lived in an age of slavery, and far from foretelling its distant doom he classed it among the "natural" institutions of society. He lived in an age of small States, and far from seeing their decay he prepared no scheme of union for their defence. The dynasties founded by Alexander the Great's generals left the City-State a mere pawn in the game of militarism: the all-conquering arm of Rome completed its destruction. The drama, in Aristotle's view, may advance to new forms if circumstances change, but there is no such advance lying ahead of the City-State, and this opinion falls from the lips of Alexander's teacher! He stereotypes society in the stationary State he envisages.

Aristotle's closest approach to the consideration of the ideal is his criticism of the Platonic conception. Has he more than a glimpse of scientific progress when he discusses changes in medicine which have modified the art of healing? Though he has not the resources of palæontology at his command, he entertains a general notion of the origin of higher species by ascent from lower. In his examination of the factors of evolution it is amazing to note that he discusses the survival of the fittest hypothesis, which he states quite plainly. Alack! he dismisses it. His view of the development of life ultimately led to the correct interpretation of the Mosaic account of the creation, and his view St. Augustine (354-430) warmly accepted. Indeed if the teaching of this African Father, in this respect at least, had remained the teaching of the Church, the triumph of the theory of evolution might have been anticipated by more than fifteen centuries. It is impossible for a man with the scientific bent of Aristotle to believe in the operation of chance. Nothing, he stoutly holds, which occurs regularly, can be the result of accident. If he believes in a law of nature, he also believes in laws of nature. The adaptation manifested in the world obliged him to discover for himself an intelligent first cause. This theistic tinge influenced the early Christians, especially St. Augustine, and in time the authority of Aristotle in the Medieval Church was elevated to a position at least as exalted as that of Holy Writ itself. The noblest of the precious metals cannot be handled by the goldsmith till it has been mixed with alloy. There is alloy, no doubt, in Aristotle's gold; but in spite of it, or because of it, his work is imperishable.

There are deep-seated differences between the democracy of the scientist who wrote the *Politics* and that of our own day. With Aristotle a great State is not a large one, but one in which the citizens vigorously exercise their functions. With him smallness forms an essential foundation of democracy. His citizen loves the rocks and springs of the neighbourhood of Athens. He worships at the shrines and temples within her hallowed walls. All his fellow citizens attend

the general assembly, and all can take their due share in the labour of legislating and judging. True, strangers, sojourners and slaves stand outside the pale. None the less, it is open to all others who themselves are members of the Athenian parliament. To Aristotle, as indeed to Rousseau, our plan of electing representatives to Parliament or Congress would have seemed not democratic but oligarchical or monarchical. The citizen enjoys the whole of his political power: he delegates none of it. Out of the total population the citizens and their families number almost half. The presence of a body of persons, sharing the life and work of a place, but excluded from political power, came to us from the classical world, becoming a feature of the municipalities of the Middle Ages. It was not until the days of the first French Revolution of 1789 that the idea that mere birth and residence ought to confer citizenship came to be conceived, and in England it is not until the reform of the municipalities in 1835 that it came to fruition. In fact, political theory in ancient times was practically confined to cities like Athens and Rome, where public life and art and all the intellectual influences that were concentrated in a great metropolis could raise the people to an altogether exceptional level.

#### (6) *The Lawgiver*

Our modern democratic world differs from the ancient in not possessing a "lawgiver"—the Moses and Solon, who was the greatest statesman and the greatest economist Athens ever produced—the Lycurgus and Minos. Our modern totalitarian world resembles it in possessing such a lawgiver. This world possesses the superman to whom its members commit the construction of a political and social regime by which they agree—or, rather, have to agree—to live. The Greek conception was that of a single statesman who in remote antiquity enacted the laws of the Commonwealth. The Greeks of course amended the law: its original creation was due to superhuman wisdom, a view common to Plato and Aristotle. Written laws, in the opinion of the latter, are valuable, but unwritten laws, resting on custom, are invaluable, a conception far removed from that of Stalin, Mussolini, and Hitler. "For the law," according to Aristotle, "has no power to command obedience except that of habit (gained through education in its spirit), and this can only be given by length of time, so that a readiness to change existing laws to others enfeebles the power of the law!" The lawgiver creates the law which becomes the will of the Commonwealth. "There is no profit of the best laws, passed with the consent of every member of the community, if those members be not habituated and educated therein." In this Aristotelian fashion the spirit of law-abidingness enters into the mental conception of the Greek. As Nature creates the household and the household forms the State, so she creates law. Law is sovereign, for it is the collective voice of free men, of fellow citizens. Law is natural, and because it is natural it is also moral. It is a divine element immanent in human nature. Hence it follows that natural justice and



moral justice are the same. For law is essentially nothing else than the public conscience of the community. To Aristotle, as to Socrates, the legal and the moral are one. Institutions are simply the creations of law. "Men should not think it slavery to live according to the rule of the constitution, for it is their salvation." The service of the laws is for Plato also the service of the gods—a service in which to obey is nobler than to rule.

From the world of the ideal we return to the world of the real. If Thucydides found faction in the fifth century, with consequent misgovernment, the men of the third century also found it. "When a government," Mommsen sternly laid down, "cannot govern, it ceases to be legitimate, and whoever has the power has also the right to overthrow it." There is a moment which will always stand out in the history of the ancient world. It is the conference of the Greek States held at Naupactus in the year 217 B.C. For centuries the free citizens of the Hellenes had spent their manhood and their wealth in internecine wars, fighting one another, fighting with the Hellenistic kingdom of Macedonia. Representatives of the principal States, together with King Philip, came together to Naupactus in that year to discuss peace. It was then that a man of Naupactus, Agelaus, stood up and delivered a speech which in after days was often remembered. He put the world situation plainly before the warring States. He pointed out the rise of a new great power on the other side of the Adriatic—the "clouds from the West" was his phrase—and he made it clear that unless the Greek States stopped fighting one another they would find themselves before long all alike subject either to Carthage or to Rome. It was obvious to everybody that what he said was true. His hearers were impressed and agreed with him. But the warning was absolutely ineffectual. The Greek States persisted with their quarrels as viciously as ever, and within seventy years they all fell before Rome.

In the long run the captors were captive taken. For the Romans adopted the Greek conception of the State, with of course differences. The Roman State was ethical and legal, but it was much more legal than ethical. Nor can we ever forget the fact that their State embraced the known world. The eternal city, *urbs*, became the capital of the world, *orbis*. The *imperium* of the Roman magistrate became *imperium mundi*. The history of Rome, to use the proud phrase of Florus, became the history of mankind. The Romans and the Fathers of the Church took over the political theory of the Greek world, and the more we read the conceptions of both, the more we are convinced of the connection between the medieval and the ancient world. The circumstances of the Greek world rendered some theory of human inequality possible. There was an absolute dichotomy between the Greek and the barbarian. The circumstances of the Roman world, and European development since, have rendered some theory of human equality possible. For neither the Romans of the fourth century A.D., nor the barbarians, who came as conquerors of the Roman world, nor the still unconverted races, like the Saxons, stood as far apart as the Hellenic world of Plato and

Aristotle from the surrounding tribes. To such a world the barbarian was what Cassandra seemed to Clytemnestra, "one who chattered in an unknown tongue like a swallow." The dichotomy between civilised and barbarised continued broadly till the beginning of the slave trade in the sixteenth century. Now that all nations are face to face with the problem of the savage and perhaps degraded races, the theory once more tends to give way to a new Aristotelianism, based on Darwinism. Nietzsche's politics, for instance, are really a reversion to the ideals of Aristotle; for he holds the fundamental superiority of the "splendid blond beast," and scoffs at any attempt to treat inferior races as in any wise "brothers." That this view is the inspiring ideal of many practical men is as evident in German newspapers of the last two decades as it was during the two World Wars. Whether it is likely to be permanent or to produce any such change in an opposite direction as was the outcome of Greek civilisation, are questions well worth asking, and never better worth asking than at this time.

Cicero (B.C. 106-43), in his political writings, holds Athenian models constantly before his eyes. If we turn to them we find the insistence on the law of nature and the derivation of all true law from it, the growth of the State from the family, its foundation in law and justice, its existence for the sake of all, and the like. In one point, and that a fundamental one, he diverges widely. He believes in the equality of human nature just as firmly as Plato and Aristotle believe in its inequality. Men differ in many respects. In spite of these differences, Cicero points out that as there is no resemblance in nature so great as that between man and man, so there is no equality so complete. Somewhere between the time of Aristotle and of Cicero occurs this grave change in the continuity of thought, this one supreme change in the political conceptions of the European races. That it happened then is clear by a comparison of the two writers. And it was due to the breakdown of the City-State, the universalising of Hellenism, and the absorption of all Western civilisation by the Roman Empire. In essence the liberty, equality, and fraternity of the French Revolution have found the beginning of which the end is not yet.

Whether or not it be true that "through the ages one increasing purpose runs"—a question that Bury and Fisher decide in the negative—it is certain that the history of humanity is not a chaotic mass of casual, disconnected episodes, but is somehow held together by mysterious threads of continuity. Goethe bids us remember that man is not born to solve the problem of the universe but to find out wherein it consists, yet man insists on at least trying to solve this problem. Like Goethe, like Kant, we overcome scepticism by struggling with it, by criticism.

## CHAPTER II

# THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE FOURTH CENTURY

### (1) *The Eternity of Rome*

No one can read of the Roman Empire without feeling once again the thrill which stirs one at the sight of the amphitheatre at Verona, or of the ruins of Aqua Claudia, or of the lonely wall that crowns the escarpments of the Northumbrian hills—the sense of the greatness and of the fall of Rome, which must give pause to any nation called to the wide responsibilities of empire. Nor can one survey these Roman remains without thinking of the City-State that lay behind the greatness of the Roman Empire. Bury used to state that the civilisation of the later Empire had its roots deep in the past. It was, in his judgment, simply the last phase of Hellenic culture. To men of the fourth century there was—and there could only be—one Roman Empire, and they were indifferent to such matters as its geographical division into an eastern or a western section, each governed by its own ruler. No doubt in 330 the capital of the Empire came to be new Rome, Constantinople, instead of old Rome, yet such an alteration did not disturb the fundamental unity of the Empire. The classical writers know Italy to be the loveliest of countries, incomparable and indescribable; but the fountain of all literature and the lake in which it must all merge is the incomparable city of Rome.

In spite of popular belief, history never repeats itself, and accordingly no one will expect to see in the history of the City-State of Rome a repetition of the City-State of Athens. The ideal politics of Athens, as shown in the Periclean conception of the free State and the free citizen, stands contrasted with the rigid state discipline of Sparta, and no less contrasted with the Roman civic doctrine as set forth by Plutarch, “that they should walk in fear of reproof and inquiry by the magistrates, and that it was not good to give every one liberty to do what they would, following his own lust and fancy.” The Greek genius denied, explicitly or implicitly, the obligation to practise restraint and self-suppression. For restraint it substituted balance; for self-suppression, self-realisation. If Greece taught men to be human, Rome made man civilised. Latin is bone of our bone, the foundation on which our life is built; it was the Latin architects who civilised life and passed on the civilisation they had made, who

Brought the work by wondrous art  
Pontifical, a ridge of pendent rock,  
Over the vext abyss.

And if it be that the hand of Rome was too strong, if

With pins of adamant  
And chains they made all fast, too fast they made  
And durable!

the world has, again and again, gone back to Greece for enlargement and liberation. For all Europe, and for the world outside Europe, "beyond the pathways of the year and the sun," Rome is a mother, Latin a second mother-tongue. Hellas is rather a witch-goddess, only half human, but also half divine; Greek thought and art are at once inevitable and unapproachable creations rather than structures, potent solvents and recurrent inspirations.

The pressure of the State was grave at Athens; it was far graver at Rome. The acute consciousness of this growing pressure forms the most outstanding feature of the social and economic life of the Empire of Rome. Every thoughtful member of it fell back on the Greek conception that his private interests must always yield to the common weal. For three centuries we watch the rulers of the Empire advancing, some consciously, some perhaps unconsciously, towards the goal of its civilisation. The extension of the political franchise, the establishment of municipalities, the reorganisation of local government, the encouragement of the spread of Roman speech and Roman customs, the assimilation of the provincial subjects in an orderly and coherent civilisation—all alike bear witness to the resolution with which the Emperors performed their task. It was a splendid aim attained. In 212 Caracalla conferred the full franchise of Rome on every, or almost every, freeborn provincial who was not already in possession of it. We question if he were actuated by sentimental motives. Probably he was simply readjusting the recruiting system, strengthening the army which kept back the barbarian. But the very fact that the step could be taken demonstrated how near to the Roman the provincial had then been brought. The Empire took up and completed a task of which no Greek or Roman of the Republic ever dreamed. The Ciceronian dream of the equality of human nature was at last realised.

After the days of Diocletian (245-313) the Emperor stood increasingly for the common weal, of Roman and provincial alike. The State fell a victim to the allurements of a benevolent despotism. The Emperors of the fourth century were, in the judgment of M. Jullian, of higher quality than those of the first, and, in aspiration at least, they take rank as benevolent despots. The last quarter of the fourth century witnessed a decline in the prestige of the Emperor. If a straw shows which way the wind is blowing, it is significant that in 360 we have the first known case of a barbarian in the Roman service retaining his barbarian name.

The fall of Rome was unthinkable, and could not come till the day of judgment and the end of the world. For this frame of mind the noble labours of the Emperors were mainly responsible. "Until philosophers are kings," declared Plato, "or the kings or princes of this world have the

spirit and power of philosophy, cities will never have rest from their evils." Aristotle thought the tyrant should turn himself into a benevolent despot, the plan to be advocated by Machiavelli eighteen centuries later, and as indeed it had been advocated before Aristotle by Isocrates. Let the tyrant stand, like Solon, "with his shield held aloft over rich and poor alike," and all will be well. Let him be like Joseph II of Austria or Frederick II of Prussia or a Charles III of Spain. Let him be an Emperor of the fourth century.

## (2) *Rome the Heart of the World*

Fifth-century Athens soars so supremely over fourth-century Rome that we are taken aback by the utter descent in the political level of the citizen. We miss the note of freedom, both religious and political, in Greek life. On the other hand while Greek and Barbarian had been sharply distinguished in Athens, the distinction between Roman and Barbarian ultimately vanished within the Empire. The colour bar of modern times is conspicuous by its absence. The Greeks took a much stronger line, for by a decree issued by Pericles the enrolment as citizens of Athens of the children of foreign marriages was expressly forbidden. The Romans proved more tolerant and ancient epitaphs attest that in Numidia for instance, inter-marriage took place. At the same time we do well to remember that Lord Cromer placed the Romans far ahead of any modern nation in their power of assimilating subject races. The age of the Antonines witnessed the absence of the colour bar, the blessings of the Pax Romana, the longest period of peace the world has ever known, the greatest free trade empire, international culture, a world State, universal law and administration as good as human frailty can achieve. Gibbon, like Mommsen, looked on those far-off days as the happiest humanity had known. None the less, the men of the age of the Antonines were daily expecting the crash of the world, and the savage self-denial of the Egyptian hermits testified to their belief that life was not worth living. Even the wisest of Roman Emperors gave it as a counsel of perfection, that the man who felt God's call within him should be ready for death as for a trumpet's call.

The State regarded Rome, the City of the Seven Hills, as the heart of everything. Was not the Mediterranean the Middle Sea? The State, outwardly at least, had gone from strength to strength. At the beginning of the fourth century Rome had no real rival on earth. Sovereign of the world, she had conquered Europe, Asia, and Africa; she had afforded proof of a vitalising power strong enough to absorb all kindreds and tongues without ceasing to be herself. The conquered had ceased to complain and had adopted the language of their conquerors. It is then that Rome despaired of the future and uttered an intense cry of distress. The proscriptions had brought about what Seck calls the extirpation of the best. The purpose of the proscriptions was to destroy the most formidable; and thus the survival of the unfittest was secured,

thanks to despotism and the servility which is its inevitable concomitant. Consequently, there is loss of energy, loss of spirit, and failure of nerve which are quite incompatible with progress. It was a world where the growing fear was that the machine of State would break down, and ultimately Rome ceased to produce characters able enough to work its ever growing complexity. Spengler regards this decay as an example of the principle that "*Zivilisation* is the fate which awaits every Kultur." By *Zivilisation* he means the "mandarism" to which bureaucracy falls a victim, and by Kultur he means the product of the creative spirit. Nevertheless, Rome saved the treasure trove of Palestine as well as of Greece. When the wild peoples of the east and the north at last arrived, this treasure had been preserved because it had been contained within the framework of the Empire.

The degeneration, on which Seeck insists, did not display itself merely in the sterility due to the lessened inclination of men to propagate the race, for it is strikingly shown in the want of intellectual originality which marks the Imperial period from its very beginning. What did the Romans of the Empire originate? We know of nothing. No great writer succeeded Juvenal and Tacitus. No orator rivalled Cicero, no poet explored the unexhausted possibilities of the hexameter as Virgil left it in later books of the *Æneid*. For three centuries what fresh movement is there in native Roman literature? Poverty of ideas, incapacity for hard thinking, and excessive deference to authority characterised the Roman world. Seeck sees a symptom of degeneracy in the absolutism of the Empire, which he attributes to the moral weakness of the Senate. "Rome, thou hast lost the breed of noble bloods."

Despotism muzzled free speech, and rhetorical training strangled literary genius. Here is the truth, but not the whole truth. Despotism does not forbid all forms of intellect, else there were no great names in the modern literature and science of Russia. Evil traditions of the schools are not omnipotent, else some of the best poets of England would never have penned a line. The absence of oratory was not merely due to despotism; it resulted largely from an improved judicial standard which rejected the ornamental irrelevances of Cicero and demanded matter-of-fact argument. So far as intellect expressed itself on paper, its works were the great legal treatises, the foundation of the modern law of Europe. Besides, men of the Empire, like many able men of to-day, crowded the ranks of practical administration, and their brains did not take literary shape because they were otherwise occupied.

The Roman world remained strangely motionless, or, rather, like the rotating wheel, exhibited motion without movement. Neither in agricultural nor in technical training does a single idea of any significance come to light after the first century. The Roman heroes are generals and administrators, not philosophers, poets, or artists. There can be few contrasts so startling as that between the splendid scientific achievements of the Greeks and the lack of such achievement by the Romans. By the year 400 science had virtually been at a standstill for six centuries, centuries of wide development in law and administration, packed too

with stirring events. We witness various advances in applied science, water mills, for instance, but these advances concerned the application of known laws, and they revealed no new laws. The Romans knew something of botany and zoology, but, as Du Bois Reymond has noticed, they made no progress in physical science or in its practical application to such things as machinery.

While the scientific and literary worlds remained motionless, the world of the State was anything but motionless. In the interval between the City-State of Augustus and the World State of Constantine (c. 288-337) much water had flowed under the bridge of the Tiber. One had been a philosopher-king, the other a tyrant though a tyrant with the noblest intentions. The country in the fourth century had replaced the city and the peasant the citizen. There was no longer the feeling for the common weal that had once existed. The stability of the State was far more important than the prosperity of the people. The peasant hated the landowner and the official, the city proletariat hated the city bourgeoisie, and they all cordially united in the heartiest hatred of the army. Nor was the Christian exempt from his share of hatred, for was he not in popular opinion undermining the unity of the State by his talk of a kingdom which, in spite of his protestations, was probably of this world? What had embittered every rank of life was the barbarously bloody social and civil war of the third century, which had lasted endless years, uprooting the lifelong customs of authority and discipline. Adam Smith maintained in conversation in 1777 that "there is a lot of ruin in a nation." His statement is true within limits. At the beginning of the fourth century Constantine could declare that the Empire had survived the horrors of the third century, but could he say much more? The State must live, and because it must live, it must tax its inhabitants, still suffering from social and civil war. Such a war disorganised industry and commerce, for it meant the loss of security, and without security who is willing to work? The sea was insecure and the roads were neglected with the result that markets narrowed as the purchasing power of the population contracted. Taxation ate into the capital required by agriculture, and how could the landowner and the peasant prosper? Taxation was ruthless because the Empire was poor and the Empire was poor because taxation was ruthless. Rostovtzev does not indulge in overstatement when he describes the relationship between the State and the taxpayer as organised robbery, with forced work, forced deliveries, forced loans or gifts in its train.

### (3) *The Disappearance of Genius*

The masses had in no small degree swamped the classes, communicating their appeal to them. Roman civilisation, like Greek, had largely been the civilisation of the upper classes. The lower classes had absorbed the upper, and with this absorption intellectual influences had gradually waned. No new literary or scientific stars arose on the horizon, who

in the past had assured the predominance of the enlightened noble patronising them. The problem in the fourth century then was, Can you preserve the civilisation of the higher classes as it penetrates that of the lower? Is inequality in wealth what it was to a socialist like Rodbertus, the price we pay for our education in caring for culture a distinct from material ends? Alack! is not the answer that if culture penetrates to the level of the majority, the standard gradually falls? In fact, Rostovtzev asks another question, Is not every civilisation bound to decay as soon as it begins to penetrate the masses? Behind his question lies the quiet assumption that the man of genius comes from the higher classes, an assumption unwarranted by the facts of history. The great individual may come from any class, and from this angle of approach fourth century civilisation depends on how far we can discern signs of the recognition of the worth of the individual. There are, however but few signs of the recognition either in the Empire or in the Church. Both felt the attraction of Greek ideals, and both placed the common weal before the individual weal. The Greek creative forces could not develop and consolidate on the grand scale their epoch-making achievements: the Romans could achieve this splendid task. Their gain was accompanied by loss. For as the Empire increased in size, the process of levelling increased with it. This process involved the absorption of the higher classes and the consequent loss of their permeating power. Increasingly men turned to the Emperor. In the third century his cult had been impersonal, but it gradually turned personal. The worship of the Emperor meant that he embodied in his own person sacred as well as secular authority. He referred to himself as "My Eternity," and to doubt the correctness of his judgment came to savour of "sacrilege."

From the head of the Empire we turn to the head of the Church. In our generation there is a growing tendency to cry, Back to Christ and away with theology. The generation of the fourth century adopted a wholly different attitude towards Him. To us His personality is so winning that instinctively we cry, *Ecce Homo*! Yet if we are to understand the men of the fourth century aright we must set Him against their background, and their background differed by worlds from ours. They were convinced not by His human qualities but by His superhuman. For they had to overcome the fear of their generation, the generation that sought security from the anger of the gods, and in seeking this security they hoped to escape from fate, the world of the mysterious, uncharted forces surrounding them on all sides. Accordingly, they sought Him who was foreshadowed by prophecy, attested by sign after sign, by power after power, and especially by that convincing display of power visible in His resurrection. He is truly a Saviour who works in and through the new community we call the Church, and in His working He is able to save to the uttermost, to deliver His community from the terrible dangers of the unseen. Their God, like the God of many theologians, is a God who lives in the gaps of the cosmic order. St. Paul drops a hint when he alludes to beings more awful, more dominant than



even the might of Cæsar, and he bids the Christian reflect that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world." This is what lurks behind his phrase, "the prince of the power of the air." However we may interpret these phrases, lying at the back of them is the sense that there are hidden forces of darkness, and Christ can rescue men from these hidden forces.

Devils and daemons existed in the classical world as they existed in the Jewish world. How could men achieve deliverance from these paralysing terrors? Could the founder of the new faith achieve this deliverance? If so, He possessed an attraction for His own generation and for after generations well-nigh irresistible. To the Romans these terrors were genuine, and if Christ could rescue them from their authority . . . But such a thought was too wonderful, yet Christians assured them that He could bestow this amazing deliverance. Naturally we experience no surprise when Tatian in the second century proclaims with triumph that "instead of daemons we have learnt one Master who deceiveth not."

The attitude of our generation to dogma, like our attitude to Jesus, is not in the least like that of the fourth century. To-day dogma suggests an unnecessary garment which cramps the mind: the fourth century men, who had found they had outgrown the pagan cults, welcomed dogma as an urgent need for covering the nakedness to which they had been long and bitterly exposed. For centuries man had held in his hands a chart of the world which bestowed upon him assurance and comfort. For one it might be Mithras, for another Numa, for another Isis, and for yet another Cybele. We discern a certain congruity of outlook in those beliefs or charts, and yet in spite of this congruity men came to think that their charts were singularly misleading. On one occasion Zeno pointed to the wooden basis of an altar which was visible at the extremity of the Stoa. "This once stood in the middle of the Stoa; it was removed out here, because it stood in people's way; please apply this principle to yourselves." In the fourth century men applied it, and they discovered that the pagan cults stood in their way. The educated revived them as the uneducated revived Christianity. The assurance of Christianity, the comfort it gave, and the institutionalism that sheltered this assurance and comfort, bestowed upon the average man what had hitherto scarcely crossed his path.

The ancient world had been in a position of unstable equilibrium, swinging between the opposite poles of the dogmatism supplied by the Stoic and the lack of dogmatism supplied by the sceptic. Was there no position lying between these extremes? Yes, cried the Christian, I have discovered my position. I have found a middle way. I can see a place for dogma, for the intellect that examines dogma, for faith in dogma and for faith in intellect. Behind all I can discern truth, truth for the uneducated as well as for the educated, and in the gaps of truth I possess a trust and a certainty that the gaps will be filled. I take a human example. I have one friend who means more to me than anyone

else in the world. My confidence in him is implicit. So far, he has never betrayed me in any respect, and yet it is not on this ground that I rest on his honour and integrity. I do not compute the careful calculation of his conduct, for I am certain of it. What my friend is to me suggests my attitude to the great Friend behind the universe. His own generation—and mine—assure me that He has delivered men from the dreadful danger of the daemon, from the unseen forces of evil. Prophets foretold what He could do, and His deeds attest the truth of their prophecies. He worked miracles to which His contemporaries bore witness, and, greatest of all, He left the grave, and on leaving He founded a new institution to which I have the honour of belonging. Yes, and even my Emperor Constantine admits the force of my position, for has he not embraced my creed? "O Galilean, thou hast conquered."

#### (4) *Passive Christianity*

The Galilean had conquered, but He had conquered at least as much by His passive qualities as by His active. He had taught men to endure, but had He taught them to progress? He could of course teach them to progress, but did the men of the fourth century realise the vital need of this conception? We doubt it for the simple reason that the idea of indefinite progress meant nothing to them. Down to 1914 most of us felt inclined to regard it as a matter of course. Knowledge expands, we thought, and there is no reason why it should not continue to do so. This was not the view of the Greeks. For the most part they conceived the possibility of a process of deterioration, a cycle or a succession of cycles. The majority thought there had been a Golden Age, but it was long past. Beyond the "Pillars of Hercules" once existed Plato's "Atlantis": it is now lost to the sight of men in the depths of the sea. In it innocence and happiness reached the highest possible stage: the utmost man can expect is a return, however distant, to this stage.

The men of the fourth century were little inclined to believe in any ideal even in the past. Their question was, Had there ever been an ideal? Was it still possible to conceive it? The changed attitude lay in the circumstance that the spirit of the people still remained crushed by the civil war of the third century which gave a deathblow to idealism. Let man bow his head in resignation. There was no hope here, though Christians asserted there was hope hereafter. What was their assertion worth? It was on a par with their assertion of the eternal worth and importance of the individual human soul. Its recognition implied true justice, a true sense of brotherhood among men, and men were faced with widespread injustice and universal hate. Still, the welfare of society is the welfare of the individual: the quality of a society is the quality of its members. The peasant came to the sad conclusion that his plain course was to care for the weal of his family—and no more. If he were ambitious he might seek to enter the army—but there were many deserters from it—or he might try to turn robber—but there were

many robbers. If he were more ambitious he might become a curial, which simply meant he exchanged a hard life for an even harder with more restrictions on his freedom of movement. The artisan was in no better plight. The more he produced, the higher became his rank: the higher his rank, the more fetters galled him. Surely there was only one conclusion to the whole matter. Better the evils he knew than those he knew not; better remain in the position in which the gods had placed him.

The spirit of resignation pervaded many ranks of society, and the Stoics shared it. They maintained the doctrine of cycles, powerfully expounded by Shelley in his final chorus of his *Hellas* and they also maintained that the world continually returns on itself without hope of improvement. Was not pessimism inevitable? The world was an enigma which was insoluble. Let us hear Shelley on this matter:

The world's great age begins anew,  
The golden years return,  
The earth doth like a snake renew  
Her winter weeds outworn:  
Heaven smiles and faiths and empires gleam,  
Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains  
From waves serener far;  
A new Peneus rolls his fountains  
Against the morning star.  
Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep  
Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.

A loftier Argo cleaves the main,  
Fraught with a later prize,  
Another Orpheus sings again,  
And loves, and weeps, and dies.  
A new Ulysses leaves once more  
Calypso for his native shore.

Oh, write no more the tale of Troy,  
If earth Death's scroll must be,  
Nor mix with Laian rage the joy  
Which dawns upon the free;  
Although a subtler Sphinx renew  
Riddles of Death Thebes never knew.

Another Athens shall arise,  
And to remoter time  
Bequeath the sunset to the skies,  
The splendour of its prime;  
And leave, if nought so bright may live,  
All earth can take or heaven give.

Saturn and Love their long repose  
 Shall burst, more bright and good  
 Than all who fell, than one who rose,  
 Than many unsubdued;  
 Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers,  
 But votive tears and symbol flowers.

Oh, cease! must hate and death return?  
 Cease! must men kill and die?  
 Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn  
 Of bitter prophecy.  
 The world is weary of the past,  
 Oh, might it die or rest at last.

No doubt Greece had taught men to be human, and Rome in turn civilised mankind. But what if mankind was weary of humanity and of civilisation? It was a question asked in the fourth century, and is even asked in the twentieth.

#### (5) *The New Slavery*

"The gods sell everything at a price," so runs the ancient saw. The price paid by all for the work of Diocletian (245-313) and Constantine (c. 288-337) was slavery in substance—if not in form. The landowners were the slaves of the Emperor through the curials: they were the masters of their serfs. The curials were the slaves of the officials: they were the masters of the municipalities. The municipalities were the slaves of the officials: they were the masters of the artisans. The list might be extended, but enough has been given to show that in the Roman Empire society was divided into classes, and these in time hardened into castes, destructive of the possibility of rising from one rank of life into another. In another fashion the individual was forced to acknowledge that his prudent course was to resign himself to any blows fate might fling at him. The power of the Empire contributed to his own powerlessness. As he could not fight its dictates, was not his obvious plan to accept them as best he could? The spirit of resignation replaced the spirit of energy, for no one and no association—not even the Church—could dream of opposing the Empire. Life was hard, hopeless, and horrible, and the hardness, the hopelessness and the horribleness induced the idea that Roman civilisation was afflicted with incurable and increasing decay.

Renan declared that the Roman world was growing sad. But there is something almost frightening about it too. It seems so often to show us the features of our own—the complicated mechanism of a civilisation, highly developed industrially and world-wide in extent, the power of new-won riches, the contrast of poverty and insane luxury, the medley of scepticism and religious unrest. We see it dying of spiritual atrophy, dying by inches among its wealth and its sumptuous pleasures—and with

the tragic element, that it is no oriental world without a sense of its stagnation, but one tormented by memories of nobler days, derived from the Greeks, stung by aspirations it inherits to no purpose, sensitive with a nervous organism, with thoughts and instincts not so unlike our own. Thank God, the darkest diagnosis of our condition cannot ignore the many saving forces which make our world different from that. And yet the sense of resemblance haunts one like the vestige of a bad dream, and one goes from the fourth century to divine something almost sinister in the moving life of our streets.

The problem of society was the due ordering of the relationship of the individual to the State or the Church of the fourth century. It was the great problem then: it is the great problem now. The Greek State brought the governed into close contact with the government, and stimulated the growth of political capacity and true citizenship. Once urbs became orbis, the Roman State failed in this primary duty. The gulf between the governors and the governed widened, and tended to widen increasingly. The Romans, like the Greeks, failed to solve the problem of how the average man may be taught virtue. The law of nature appealed to those who had a turn for self culture and wise conduct, but did it—could it?—prevent ordinary folk from being cruel and corrupt? Cruel and corrupt as were the citizens of Athens, those of Rome were more so. The truth is that the imperial machine of State proved too strong for Roman liberties. In its all-embracing grasp Roman character lost its salt and iron.

It was the glory of Christianity that it provided a place even for the humblest. Every soul possessed worth in the sight of God, its creator. It was a great and precious conception to bring to the Empire. The world witnessed the strange and striking sight of an institution which believed that every man and—stranger still—every woman, however humble and erring, and even vicious, were capable of communion with all that was righteous and true. In the third century Celsus attacked the Christianity Origen defended, and one of his attacks turns on the baseness of the converts of the new creed. "Let us hear whom these people invite: Whosoever, they say, is a sinner, whosoever is unwise, whosoever is foolish—in a word, whosoever is a wretch—he will be received into the Kingdom of God." Able as Celsus was, he could not see that the shame of Christianity constituted its glory, for what the religions of the State, the worship of Mithras and Numa, of Isis and Cybele, could not achieve was the very thing that Christianity did achieve. It offered to every individual, wise or unwise, saint or sinner, his due share within its fold. It was one day to make possible a true democracy, a true justice, a true sense of brotherhood among men. The Ciceronian dream of the equality of human nature was at last realised—in another fashion. Christianity, according to Bury, "emphasised the privileges, hopes and fears of the individual. Christ died for each man. It was thus opposed to the universality of the Roman world, in which the individual and his personal interests were of little account." Christianity inevitably operated, from this angle, as a dissolvent force in the Empire.

The wonderful growth of the hermits during the fourth century testified to the attractions of Christianity for them. It also inevitably attracted not only the ascetic but also the runaway slave, the fugitive from the law, the members of every social grade, even of senatorial rank, who saw in this movement a means of escape from the suffocating system, judicial and fiscal, of the Empire. The well-to-do woman is a feature of the time. Such women found in Christianity what Mithras never supplied, for did it not exclude them from its lodges? A. W. Verrall maintained that the radical disease of which, more than anything else, classical civilisation perished was an imperfect ideal of woman.

The place of religion was a fixed one within the Empire. Because the State discharged its duty towards the gods, in turn it confidently expected the gods to discharge theirs. This relationship meant that the State took over the responsibilities of individual citizens, and emancipated them from religion, the uneasy fear of the supernatural, a fear liable to break out from time to time and to turn to panic. Inevitably the Roman instinct for government led to a special commission in charge of all foreign worship. This commission entertained no objection to fresh gods in the Roman pantheon, but it must know of their existence, and include them in the roll of deities permissible to worship.

The rite and the myth were all important; the rite, because it established correct relations with the dim mysterious world of the forces all around man; the myth, because it assigned reasons for the rite, and with the rank and file the rite gained at the expense of the myth. Of course the philosopher sought a key to the meaning of the myth, but worship for not a few embodied what they cared to offer to the gods, and this worship in the last resort rested on the deepest emotion in their souls. The Romans loved tradition; they loved the worship that had gradually grown around it; and they stood in dread of any innovation that might impair it. They wove a halo of religion around the household and around the State, and this halo assured them of the permanence of both institutions. They conceived revolution as "something new," something that might lead them away from the well-worn paths consecrated by tradition, which in its turn was consecrated by religion. Who could foresee what might befall, what unknown terror, what grim disease, what grave famine might ensue because of innovation?

Society was turning religious. There were many religions, and there was little love lost between them. A cult suited a section of society here or there. No cult save Christianity dreamt of commanding the allegiance of all. With the growth of the power of religion all were deeply affected. The lower classes caught the infection emotionally, and were indifferent to the intellectual basis upon which their faith rested. This indifference eventually turned to hostility. Their attitude in turn influenced the upper classes who also came to be dominated by it. Anti-intellectualism is a feature of our day: it was also a feature of the fourth century. The deep distrust of the mind is a phenomenon appearing in cycles. The masses shared this distrust. What they craved was not a doctrine but a revelation. Was Christianity this revelation?

It had this at least in its favour that it came with a message of hope to all. What had the religions of the State to offer to those who were not citizens? The pagan creeds were negative rather than positive. Christianity urged positive duties at the expense of negative and these duties embraced women as well as men. What had the widespread worship of Mithras, the strongest rival of Christianity, to bring to women excluded by this cult? What had the religion of Numa to offer—if you did not own the household gods demanded by it? How could the poverty-stricken enjoy the costly mysteries of Isis and Cybele?

Doubts of the deities worshipped swelled the current of anti-intellectualism. Christianity itself experienced this reaction. Besides, is there not an element of the irrational in religion if it is to create a deep and lasting impression? The Church possessed a reasoned and reasonable theology, and yet inside its ranks men realised their time here was short. Why mispend it on the learning of the heathen when they were in possession of higher truth, or at any rate the only truth that vitally mattered? So thought many a man, and his thoughts were shared by such Fathers of the Church as St. Jerome (331-420) and St. Augustine (354-430).

Take the case of St. Augustine. He is so outstanding that Harnack ventures to call him the first modern man. His individualism is transparent. "I desire to know nothing but God and the soul. Did I say nothing else? Nothing whatsoever." The amount of good—and the amount of evil<sup>1</sup>—he did can never be measured. His influence was so potent that men reckon the Middle Ages to have come to an end when his sovereign sway over them expired. His *Confessions* leaves the impression on its readers that the study of the classics was definitely less valuable than the study of theology. His powerful personality carried his influence far and wide. We do not care to say that Christianity temporarily debased the intellectual currency, yet in the hands of such leaders of thought as St. Jerome and St. Augustine it scarcely discouraged its debasement.

### (6) *Religious and Political Quietism*

Art and philosophy, literature and learning, were declining long before the days of St. Jerome and St. Augustine. Not all the blame can be placed upon their shoulders. Some falls upon Rome and her increasingly centralised government. Athens too must bear her share of responsibility, for the impulse to civilisation came from her, and this impulse was as much exhausted as the Greek world itself. The note of freedom had been prominent in the religious and political life of Greece. This is clear in the conception of a free State and a free citizen. It is no less clear in the attitude of the Greek mind towards the supernatural or divine powers, the complete absence of any Bible or creed, the comparative absence (which a few exceptions really render the more striking)

<sup>1</sup> We are thinking of his persecuting policy.

of any persecution of free thought. None the less it is obvious that the Greek impulse to freedom had long been exhausted, and the effects of this are perceptible on all sides in Rome.

The Empire bestowed a wonderful system of law upon its members, but it was never able to imbue them with a love of liberty. The Christians preserved something of the ancient fire to be free. Athanasius successfully resisted Constantine. Ambrose resisted and rebuked Theodosius. This was not, however, the spirit of liberty which regards the State as the protector of all the free-loving impulses of its members. Freedom was surely only less eternal than the Seven Hills of Rome herself. The attitude of Christianity was not quite this, for it was more anxious for the liberty of the group, the Church, than the liberty of the State. The Christian remembered the truth enshrined in Gierke's maxim, "Without you there is no I, and without I there is no you; and man owes what he is to the association of man with man."

Let us consider this matter. The name of Cæsar was so mighty throughout the world that it was the earnest hope of the Church to be left alone with as little contact with the State as possible. The spirit of the Church was obedience to the State up to the point where it might touch conscience. That is to say, unless Cæsar ordered something plainly contrary to God's commands, Cæsar received obedience. He might be despotic; it was a thousand pities if he were. Still, obedience was due to him, and accordingly it was rendered. The attitude of the average Christian was obviously passive rather than active. He accepted what was happening in a spirit of resignation, the spirit prevalent at the time, as apparent among non-Christians as among Christians. The Christians in general and the hermits in particular sensitively experienced this attitude. Besides, they were so engrossed with the world to come that they paid but little attention to the world in which they lived. They were submissively reverent to the powers that be, for were they not, as a great Roman declared, ordained of God? Political passiveness, accordingly, was their allotted rôle. It is no matter of wonder that Constantine, taking advantage of this submissive reverence, turned Christian. He astutely stabilised his throne, for while he granted privileges to an association of believers he received from them unquestioning obedience. What sovereign does not value such obedience? One question remains in our mind, How far did the general spirit of resignation contribute to the success of Constantine's policy? It contributed in part, but a larger share is to be ascribed to the political quietism of the Christians.

The attitude of the Church towards liberty in the fourth century was negative rather than positive. It could—and did—attack any violation of the rights of conscience, and these attacks remain in honourable remembrance. Did the Church breathe the lofty aspirations towards liberty which compel men to translate them from ideal into real? There is regrettably little evidence that it pursued such a policy, and its traditions and documents could hardly encourage it in such a pursuit. How could the Church of the early Empire defy the forces of Cæsar?



Inquestioning obedience was a far easier rôle to assume, and alack! assumed it was. It is significant that the Anglican clergy of the seventeenth century, like the French, preached the doctrine of passive obedience, and preached it as if it were entirely congruous with the spirit of Christianity. Alexis de Tocqueville realised this point of view when he remarked that Christianity lays down that you should render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, but it discourages the question whether Cæsar is entitled to such obedience. This discouragement accorded with the *Zeitgeist* of the fourth century, and the very weakness of Christianity then proved its strength.

There had been the note of freedom in Athens before its exhaustion, and there had been its pale imitation in Rome. The Empire murdered its pale imitation, and Christianity acquiesced. There had been a spirit of patriotism. The Empire also murdered it, and Christianity again acquiesced. A man of the mental stature and the good breeding of St. Paul prided himself in demonstrating that his belief united Jew and Gentile, as it came to unite Roman and barbarian, thus annihilating patriotic distinctions. If the Empire was world-wide, the Church was world-wide in its morality, binding all alike even in the first century. The Pauline conception of universal morality anticipated Caracalla's edict of what amounted to universal citizenship by a century and a half. From our angle of approach St. Paul never did anything greater, and we stand amazed at his prescience. Some, like Mr. Tarn, trace the morality of the world to Alexander, and some to the Stoic philosopher Seno, but who can doubt the share of the Apostle to the Gentiles? Submissive reverence and political quietism continued what he had begun. What he planned was not realised in the middle of the first century: it was better realised in the middle of the fourth. "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." So he proclaimed; but his attitude to the powers that be nullified in no small measure this declaration, none as great as the annihilation of the distinction between Roman and barbarian.

Church Councils, like those of Nicæa in 325, are full of life and discussion during the fourth century, and this strangely contrasts with the want of life and discussion on the part of the inhabitants of the Empire. "If men had sat in the Senate," comments Seeck, "the Roman Emperor would not have been more powerful than any constitutional ruler of our own time." Sir John Seeley emphasises the contrast between secular and sacred activities. "The explanation," according to him, of this is that the later despotism was one which secured itself by accepting limitations. Its subjects surrendered finally one half of their liberties on condition of enjoying securely the other half. For a nominal freedom, which was in fact unlimited slavery, they accepted an undisputed but limited slavery. Human free will made terms with the victorious power of government, and accepted a fraction, but a secure fraction of its original possessions."

Christianity, as taught in the fourth century, accorded with the spirit of the age, but it encountered grave obstacles to its success. There

was the strength of the past involved in tradition and ancestral custom, and what both meant to the ordinary man. The *patria potestas* had long been crumbling away. Still with such a breach with the past as Christianity suggested, certain questions arose. How was a man to maintain authority in the household? How was an official to maintain authority and discipline in the State? How could the head of the family propitiate the gods that he and his ancestors had worshipped for untold generations? It was all very well for an Emperor like Constantine to turn Christian, but had even he weighed all the possible consequences of his action? Suppose a famine came? or a plague? or the invasions of the barbarians? Surely these were instances of the weird powers of the ancient deities. It is enough to turn over the leaves of St. Augustine's *City of God* to realise how acutely these dangers presented themselves to the minds of the Romans, and to see how anxiously the Saint tried to meet these serious arguments against Christianity. In the first decade of the fourth century Arnobius manifests the same anxiety as the better known labours of St. Augustine. In the seventh book of his work *Against the Nations* he seeks to show that all a convert lost through his disuse of pagan rites he more than gained by his use of Christian ones. Nevertheless, he realises he is hard driven. He desires to exclude heathen sacrifice, and he is so bent on its exclusion that he gives it up, and he gives up as well the sacrifices of the Jewish Temple and—more extraordinary still—the sacrifice of the Cross. His fellow apologists proved more statesmanlike, for they fully recognised the wisdom of Roman insistence on rite and ceremony, and they admitted that sacrifice as well as rite and ceremony was required, and they were willing to admit that they shared the nature of *actio*, and that this very name might be used of the Eucharist itself.

There were political obstacles to Christianity. During the fourth century the Emperor clearly possessed divine as well as human authority. Incense was burned before his image. Now as Christians refused to burn incense, the imperial mind entertained doubts of their loyalty. Was not this refusal dangerous to the stability of the State? The very fact that Christian apologists emphasise their loyalty and their prayers on behalf of the Emperor testify to the gravity of the situation. Enemies, and even friends, asked anxiously, What was the esoteric meaning of Christian teaching upon the kingdom of God? Did sedition lurk behind it?

What were the causes of the success of Christianity? Among them were its merits as an institution embodying the sacramentalism and the prevailing philosophy of the day. The first satisfied the sense of mystery which the worship of Mithras had taken pains to cultivate, and satisfied it more fully, as Christianity was as open to women as to men. It brought them into touch with the unseen, making the average man realise, perhaps for the first time, that the unseen contained beings in friendly relationship with himself. It adumbrated in fact fellowship with the eternal as well as with the temporal, and this fellowship afforded the means of escape from fate, from the daemons of darkness, and from all

that haunted men's imaginations. It also bestowed upon men deliverance from loneliness, for it satisfied their social and spiritual needs. Besides, Christian theology had become so highly developed that it gratified intellectual cravings on the part of its thoughtful members. Its way, mentally as well as ethically, was by no means an easy one, and yet this proved one of the potent factors in its diffusion. For men and women, in their better moments, welcomed the uncompromising allegiance the Church claimed from its members. Nor can we forget that the assurance offered was just as frankly uncompromising.

For the educated Stoicism provided a way of life, but for the uneducated it did nothing. Christianity—it was one of its proudest boasts—cared for the unlettered. Take the inscription over the graves of slaves and gladiators. "I was not. I was. I shall not be. I do not care." The hopefulness of Christianity for slave and gladiator stands in marked contrast with the hopelessness of the religions of the State. Gibbon could write his famous epigram, "I celebrate the triumph of religion and barbarism," and could write it with some truth. But the unlettered of the fourth century found their hope in religion rather than in the cults of barbarism. Gibbon's theory was that Christianity was a sort of subcutaneous poison which had taken all the sap out of the grand old Roman character. Finlay, Mommsen, Ramsay, and most subsequent historians have held, on the contrary, that Christianity rather retarded than precipitated the fall of the Empire.

The fittest survive. The persecution of the Christian lent a new meaning to this, for only the fittest, the most loyal to the new institution, could hold out against the intolerance of the Empire. The Church steadily grew during the third century, and one cause of its growth was the persecuting policy. "The blood of martyrs is a seed of life," so judged Tertullian, and after history amply confirms the truth of his judgment. The new body became a State within the State, and as the terrible civil wars of the third century weakened the State, the Church saw itself strengthened by gradually growing authority. Its care for the weak and the oppressed contrasted with the carelessness of the State for such lowly folk. Warde Fowler has demonstrated how hard it is to find in Roman writers any records of the poor. Christianity spoke on behalf of the silent poor.

The world was asking for clear and careful instruction on ethical questions, and the demand created the supply. The Church gave ruling after ruling, and Christianity, in Eduard Meyer's true phrase, was becoming mechanised, as though it were a modern army. Obedience to the rulings became the order of the day, and ethical maxims were no longer a means to an end, but were the end itself. These maxims or principles usurped the place of inner conformity of the will of the individual with the will of God. The outcome was that men concentrated upon law, not upon life; upon outward obedience rather than inward submission; upon being rather than becoming; upon actions rather than motives. All this accorded with distinct Roman tendencies which accentuated the correct performance of the rite rather than the belief underlying it.

Faith, which at first was inward trust and response to Christ, became "the faith," which crystallised into the creeds and confessions of Christendom. The Christians who knew that they were living and moving and having their very being in God, and were thus possessed of gifts which they all could share each with the other, became a formal fellowship from which the joy of its members seemed to have vanished. The meal of love and fellowship, eaten in joyous memory of Christ's redeeming love and sacrifice, became a mysterious rite in which the presence of the Lord was sought in the bread and wine. The free and spontaneous exercise of the gifts of "the prayers" became formal prayers, which of course did not always express the feelings and the wants of the individual worshipper. In a word, the Church grew into an institution with all the merits and the demerits of institutionalism. Nor is it unjust to say that this very fact proved among the causes of its success. Constantine the Great was shrewd enough to perceive the drift of affairs, and his conversion to Christianity was an outward and visible proof that it had entered into the Roman world. Of course it is possible to argue that just as the Church entered into the Roman world, so the world entered into the Church. Our reading of history shows that this was inevitable, and long before Constantine's conversion the spirit of institutionalism was present in the community Christ had founded. The time was ripe for one institution to ally itself with the other, and once the alliance was consummated the Empire rested on sacred as well as secular foundations. In a word, the Empire was eternal in a deeper sense than ever. Tertullian, who divined so much, divined the eternity of the Empire of Rome. How could it ever fall?

### (7) *Roman Law*

Inside the Church there was authority and discipline, for it copied the mechanism of the State. There were actions and interactions between State and Church. How could it be otherwise? A citizen of the State and a member of the Church had each not a little to learn from the other. Because the Empire could scarcely be governed except by the concentration of power in Cæsar's hands, the nascent democratic spirit, denied other expression, found its outlet in Christianity. A Christian could admire the law of the Empire wholeheartedly. Lawyers of unrivalled learning enriched the world with the *Digest*, the *Institutes*, and the *Code*. Romans learnt at their hands the art of conceding rights to all sorts of subject persons. They were willing to allow their slaves, their children, and their wives power to acquire certain rights of property. As foreign States and peoples fell under their sway, they were willing to admit them to a sort of equality by extending the rights of Roman citizenship to their allies and subjects with an ever-increasing liberality. Contrast this attitude with that of Athens. There a disdainful superior exacted tribute and subserviency. In time Rome became the heart of the civilised world, and subjection to her meant participation in the benefit and the glory

of the most powerful city in the world. Nor was this policy simply due to enlightened self-interest. With all the instincts of a great governing race, Rome studied the institutions of the people over whom her influence ranged. Her officials found a common element of law and custom pervading country after country, and this they turned into the law of nations with a law of nature underlying it. No doubt Greek influence widened the scope of the law of nations because men conceived this law of nature as lurking behind every code that could be devised. The remarkable matter is that while they were extending the range of the law of nature and developing jurisprudence on rational principles, they were able in a measure to preserve the Roman spirit of authority and discipline. Nor have we to wait to the great days of Justinian (483-565) for the development of Roman law, for in the judgment of H. J. Roby it stood at its highest point with Marcus Aurelius (121-80). The Romans assimilated in time the laws of other lands just as they assimilated other races. Montesquieu declared that they received slaves from all parts of the world and returned them as Romans. It is significant that the man who had to repeat Terence's famous statement, *Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto*, was a slave, acting in a play composed by a man who first set foot in Rome as a slave. Towards the close of the fourth century Claudian could write with justice:

Alone she gathers to her bosom those  
Whom late she vanquished; citizens, not foes,  
She calls them now. Their conqueror they proclaim—  
Mother, not mistress. So her general name  
Enfellowships mankind, makes fast, with bands  
Of love devout, the far-off daughter lands,  
That whereso'er we range, 'tis all one race—  
Debtors to her whose penetrating grace  
No place is strange but everywhere at home—  
One world-wide family all akin with Rome.<sup>1</sup>

The world-wide family was huge, but as there was no sound census we can do no more than guess at its size. In the first century Gibbon reckoned the population of the Empire at 120,000,000, though it was possibly 50,000,000, and in the middle of the fourth century it is probable that the population of Rome was less than 500,000.<sup>2</sup> No one now believes with Seeley and Seeck in the gradual depopulation of the Empire. Depopulation in Italy and Greece, notably in Greece, existed, but this phenomenon was particular, and did not apply to the Empire as a whole. The provinces normally afforded better financial opportunities than Italy, and there was a drift of enterprising people to them. The gap thus made was filled by slaves, and slavery was so much part and parcel of the economic system that it never seems to have occurred to anyone

<sup>1</sup> Claudian probably borrowed the sentiment from Aristides (not "The Just"), a Greek Christian philosopher who flourished early in the second century A.D.

<sup>2</sup> These are Ferdinand Lot's figures. Cf. his fine book on *La Fin du Monde Antique*.

to meddle with it, much less reform it. Physical degeneration was at work, and intensified the Roman view that marriage was a disagreeable burden which no man would undertake except as a duty to his country. Few old maids existed, as by the sacrifice of girl babies equality in number between the sexes was roughly maintained. Physical degeneration gave rise psychologically to the suicidal impulse which marks the annals of the Empire, and a not dissimilar impulse swelled the number of the Christian martyrs. Taxation and economic distress drove men from marriage to temporary unions with slave concubines. The feeling of hopelessness induced husbands and wives not to perpetuate their own misery by producing children to share it. The poor used to expose infants, and they employed drugs to prevent conception. The defenders of Christianity naturally twitted the heathen with the exposure of new born children. It did not, however, seem to occur to these defenders that the asceticism and the celibacy of the fourth century worked from this angle sheer disaster, for the finer natures left no children, allowing the base and the brutal to propagate others as base and brutal as themselves.

It is worth our while to contrast the general achievements of the Greeks and the Romans. The Greeks of the fifth century B.C. were a brilliant people with the ideal of equal law and liberty clearly placed before them. Nevertheless, we must ask some questions. Did their equal laws take account of the stranger within their gate? Did they extend protection to the sojourner, and above all, to the slave? Did their liberty never degenerate into licence? Did it never lead to faction? Did their equal laws and liberty preserve authority and discipline? The pages of Thucydides and the remark of Agelaus afford eloquent testimony that, with all their brilliance, authority and discipline fell into the background. On the other hand, the Romans lacked the dazzling qualities of the Greeks. They can enter but few names to compete with the wonderful bead-roll of fifth century Greece. They did no original work in art and philosophy, and with the outstanding exceptions of Virgil and Lucretius they were content to imitate the Greek writings. Their literature and art are confined to sterile imitation which ever becomes more empty and feeble. Nevertheless, the Romans clung fast to authority and discipline; they were legally minded. They were sterner moralists than the Greeks, demanding from the State the same moral standard they expected from themselves. They drew no distinction between the moral law the individual must observe and that which the State need not observe. There were lapses from this lofty standard—they were human beings—but the State set steadfastly in its policy towards other States the same standard of morality as its citizens observed towards one another. They were patient and methodical, skilful with accounts and with records, clever in devising compromises and in arranging old legal forms to cope with the altered needs of the times. They wrote their practical qualities all over the history of the Empire.

Let us survey these practical qualities in administration. The work of Diocletian and Constantine lay in building up a bureaucracy which

was to simplify and standardise the duties of the municipalities and other official bodies. Frederick the Great used to declare that he was not the sovereign but the first servant of the State. The bureaucrats were the first servants of the State always subject to the jealous supervision of Cæsar. The officials of the early Empire were teaching as well as learning, and among the subjects they taught none was more valuable than the art of self-government. Their successors in the fourth and fifth centuries were of a widely different frame of mind. They simply aimed at grinding out of the citizen as much as it was possible not because they particularly wanted to grind him but because stern financial necessity obliged them to do so. With the length of years accorded to the Empire there always existed the double pressure arising from the external anxiety of the barbarian and from the internal anxiety of the needs of the State. Take an instance of the way in which the reforms of Diocletian and Constantine worked in practice. The municipalities used to govern the cities in the early days of the Empire, but they were now reduced from their self-governing status to the rank of unpaid tax-gatherers of the State. Their duties in the appointment of compulsory labour were apparent, but were their rights?

The bureaucrats at first enjoyed the *esprit de corps* natural to a set of men engaged in a common task. The danger of their development lay in the omnipotency of their rule. Their intentions were admirable—intentions generally are—but what shall one say of their execution? Their high professional training and their *esprit de corps* fell away, and in the fourth century they were inefficient as well as corrupt. What were the remedies proposed? The obvious one was to return to the beginnings of the system of self-government favoured by Augustus (63 B.C.—A.D. 14). His successors proved clear-sighted but not far-sighted, and they resorted to more officials to control the existing ones, and they also resorted to spies. Both methods proved failures. The truth is that the only effective check upon bureaucracy is self-government exercised by the people. "No man," according to Abraham Lincoln, "is good enough to govern another man without that other's consent." Neither officials nor spies will ever take the place of citizens caring for the common weal. An easy way and a hard way lay before Diocletian and Constantine. The easy way was to increase the number of bureaucrats and, of course, to increase the duties laid upon their shoulders. The hard way was to organise the municipalities, allowing more scope for the initiative of the individual. The tragedy of their generation lay in the circumstance that the Mithras-worshipping Diocletian and the Christian-worshipping Constantine chose the easy way.

Both Emperors cared for the welfare of their subjects, but was it not in the fashion that refused to contemplate the results of their action in the long run? All government raises the ever-varying question of the actions and the interactions of the individual and the State, or, if we use fourth century language, the relationships of groups of individuals, like the Church, to the State. Make the State as despotic as you will, it can never cover all the relationships of the individual. Diocletian and

Constantine were much too clear-sighted not to perceive this truth, but they persisted in their choice of the easy way.

### (8) *The Able Emperors*

A great Cambridge political economist, Alfred Marshall, declared that "the average level of human nature in the western world has risen fast in the last fifty years. But it has seemed to me that those have made most real progress towards the distant goal of ideally perfect social organisation, who have concentrated their energies on some particular difficulties in the way, and not spent their strength on endeavouring to rush past them." Diocletian and Constantine, however, spent their strength in the endeavour to rush past the particular difficulties that embarrassed them in their trying task of reforming and reorganising the Empire. After their day comes the acceptance of social conditions, the divine right of things as they are. The Emperors of the fourth century are distinctly able men, but after Constantine their main concern is to maintain the machine of State as efficiently as they can. In a word, they mistook the means for the end, and how grievous was this blunder let the after history of the Roman Empire declare. Instead of the self-government of the cities we witness supervisors of municipalities, guiding, directing, and in effect controlling them in the way they should go. The early Empire had honestly attempted to afford the municipalities opportunities to learn by experience. The late Empire denied them such opportunities. Nor did the damage stop with the cities. The village communities of the second and third centuries were involved in the gradual disappearance of the powers of the city communities. On the other hand, we witness the appearance of officials, and ever more officials, whose sons were also officials. All these bureaucrats, while outwardly free, tend to harden into all the qualities, good and bad, of a caste. Thus the salvation of the Empire was secured at the expense of the individuality and the happiness of each of the scores of the millions of men who composed it. "What shall it profit a man"—or an Empire—"if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

From administration we turn to taxation. The individual came to believe that he was simply a money-making machine, and that the State existed to transfer the maximum amount of his money into the imperial coffers. There was a pathetic belief that the State was able by means of legislation to cure the economic and other evils of the body politic, a belief certainly encouraged by the reforms of Diocletian and Constantine. When the State did not profess this belief too strongly in the early Empire taxation, while heavy, was not unduly oppressive. It owned land and taxed its subjects, imposing such direct assessments as the land tax and the poll tax. Italy was exempt from both. The ordinary burdens of the citizen were not excessive and were certain in their amount, but his extraordinary burdens were excessive and uncertain. There were such items as the compulsory deliveries required for the provisioning of the army and the demands of the officials for unexpected purposes not



covered by direct and indirect taxation. Besides, there were war requisitions, spasmodic confiscations, forced labour, the compulsory payment of crown gold. There were—but what is the use of adding to the list? All one can declare is that while the ordinary citizen never felt the ordinary payments too much for him, he felt the extraordinary payments most bitterly, for he could never find out how many of them he was obliged to pay or how often he was obliged to pay them. Adam Smith in the days to come laid down as a fundamental maxim of taxation that it must be certain and clear. A cardinal vice of Roman taxation was its utter uncertainty and its utter want of clearness. The time, the manner, and the amount of payment were all uncertain, and the inevitable outcome was the insolence and corruption of the tax-gatherers.

Just as the irregularity of the Roman calendar always amazes one, so does the irregularity of the system of taxation. The Romans had born gifts of administration and entertained a lively respect for law and order, yet they never drew up a regular budget. Not even highly placed officials knew the financial requirements. Such obvious means of revenue as a gradual increase of taxation was as unthought of as a budget. Alack! the obvious means taken was the debasement of the currency. Of course the good coins disappeared from circulation, for bad currency tends to drive out good. Incidentally these coins add to our knowledge of the prevalent conditions. Their inscriptions mention four qualities. From the days of Augustus to those of Constantine they mention *virtus* or bravery. They also mention *clementia*, which survives on the coins of Constantine; *justitia*; and *pietas* or a sense of duty. It is with surprise we note that *justitia* seldom appears on coinage, and we are afraid the reason is that justice was a fast disappearing quality. At the same time its rare appearance eloquently testifies to the fact that it was in the light of a provider of justice that the ruler sought to appear to his people.

### (9) *Country Life*

Men of the type of Ausonius and Salvian, of Paulinus of Pella and Sidonius Apollinaris, flourished, and they cherished the ideals of the old-time landlord, the provider of justice to his tenants. They were the oasis in the desert of imperial life. Let anyone read the charming poem which Ausonius (c. 310-395) of Bordeaux wrote in 371 to describe his visit to the Moselle. He draws no picture of a falling population, but of peace and plenty, of towns looking forth proudly and pleasantly, of castles overhanging river banks, of vineyards on the hillsides and ploughland in the valleys, of farms and country houses looking forth from ancient walls, full of merry workers singing at their tasks, of ploughman and vinegrower and fisher and boatman, of watermen rowing and towing heavily laden barges, of water-mills, of a rich and fertile and populous countryside. Nor does this picture stand alone. Imperial policy favoured the large landlords who were fast turning into a caste. There were in fact two sets of classes—the landlords and peasants, the shop-

owners and slaves, the privileged bourgeoisie and the working classes. According to Woodrow Wilson, "interest divides: what unites is common pursuit of right." Interest did indeed divide the Empire.

As the century wore on, the cities gradually decayed and many of them disappeared, thus arresting the more developed forms of economic life. There is no longer a City-State because there are no longer cities on the old scale. Where there are a few, the backward country folk enter them, and their last state is worse than their first. The spread of Christianity too counted for something in the decay of town life. It conquered the city before it conquered the country. It was a religion, as Mr. Toynbee puts it, of the proletariat. Greek and Roman municipal life hinged on such pagan institutions as temples, cults, and games. H. F. Pelham believed that this eager, stirring city life was a substitute for politics. As Christianity increased, civic institutions decreased, and with their decrease a vital element disappeared from civic life. What was the remedy? The State saw danger averted by compulsion and ever more compulsion. Officials applied compulsion to the manufacturer and the farmer, to the landlord and other officials. What were the results? Serfdom and hereditary status. The truth is that this lack of resilience in coping with fresh problems is due to compulsory social organisation. The State could do everything. Well, thought the average individual, let it do everything. Where was the Roman genius for compromise? It was still present. Alack! the power to absorb and transform fresh elements had disappeared before officialdom.

As the Greek civilisation of Athens was essentially of the city order, the grave internal invasion of the city by the country involved a new situation, which came to mean, because of compulsory social organisation, the weakening of all that this civilisation had hitherto accomplished for the Empire. Small groups of artisans and merchants used to confront the rural serfs. The time came when the rural serfs confronted them. It is here that Heitland discovers moral decay. Under the Diocletian and the Constantinian system the masses did not take their due share in the government, and the State stage by stage restricted the numbers who did. No doubt all could not participate, and many plans for their participation were tried and failed. Why was representative government never tried? It was not a plan alien to the spirit of the Roman world, though perhaps alien to that of the Greek world. None the less, perhaps we do well to remember that we who live in democratic countries are apt to assume that representative government is a cause of the development of our civilisation, while it may very well turn out to be simply an aspect of it. An Augustus, a Diocletian or a Constantine suggest that dictatorship is a form of government more common in the past than we care to believe and perhaps more suited to certain stages of civilisation. We miss liberty in the Roman world of the fourth century as the Greeks would have missed it. The Empire took it away from the Roman, but what proof is there that he has ever valued it in the past or in the present? He was bored, and perhaps C. E. Montague was right when he declared that boredom was the first sign of decadence in a nation.

Manufacturers found the restraints imposed upon them irksome. They could not direct their energies as they saw fit. Their plight raises questions. Why did the beginnings of capitalism not mature on a large scale? Why was not machinery invented? Why were business forms so imperfect and law so perfect? It is not a sufficient answer to such questions to suggest that the artisans asked for nothing more than "bread and circuses," and allowances of oil, wine, and bacon. Nor is it true that such methods transformed the toilers into able-bodied paupers who neither sought nor desired employment. Did the blight of compulsory social organisation fall on all alike? Did its growing complexity eat the heart out of men? Was there the failure of nerve that Bury sometimes stressed? Was there at work subtler tendencies, strengthening forces leading to dissolution or disintegration? Each individual has his moods of discouragement. Each is the descendant of some one stronger, and may become the ancestor of some one weaker than himself. This process was percolating through society. Lord Balfour suggests contingencies which might bring out general weariness of spirit, contented, or perhaps discontented, stagnation. There are times when the driving power seems to go out of man, and changes in the task of administration, the supply of food, or the prevalence of knowledge, do not provide the whole explanation. The canker in the body politic is want of spirit, cessation of initiative.

If the manufacturer demanded capital, so too did the State, threatened with the barbarians along its long frontier. The want of security at home, coupled with the want of security abroad, compelled many a man thinking about the extension of his business to curtail it. For the decay of the city meant lessened opportunity for him. Let us note a few facts about the advance of the barbaric hosts. They first knocked at the gates of the Empire about the middle of the second century. For close on a hundred years they exercised continuous and increasing pressure and forced the gates slightly open. The anarchy of the third century admitted of their easy entrance, and during that century they are among the causes of the fall of the Empire. It is easy to say that their numbers were too small to work havoc—had the Empire risen to its old level of efficiency. But from the first they proved formidable. How large their armies were is obvious from the fact that though the good Emperor, Marcus Aurelius, defeated them in the second century he fully realised that their defeat imposed a heavy strain upon his resources.

The natural increase of population in the second century was rendering central and eastern Europe too confined for the German tribes who inhabited them. This drove the hordes of Asia to migrate, impelled too by the drying up of the sources of water. For well-nigh a hundred years the Roman Government mightily maintained its long frontier from the mouth of the Rhine to the mouth of the Danube. Danger threatened far more on the side of the Danube than on the side of the Rhine. It was on the Danube that Marcus Aurelius encountered the first great German peril; it was the coasts of the Black Sea and the Balkan peninsula that met the terrible Gothic invasions of the third

century; it was the battle of Adrianople in 378 that witnessed the most crushing humiliation of the Empire by the signal defeat of Valens<sup>1</sup> (c. 328-378). The successes of Julian and Valentinian on the Rhine averted hazard from Gaul down to the dread raid of 407.

### (10) *The Barbarians*

It is but fair to Diocletian and Constantine to remember the overwhelming risks they faced. The fact that they preserved peace, even at the expense of liberty, stands to their credit if we take a short view, and they would certainly say that such a view was the only one they could take. Nevertheless, their system, successful for the moment, failed in the end. The enlarged bureaucracy and the enlarged army increased the weight of taxation beyond human endurance, and men wondered if it was worth while to run the costly and cumbersome machine which the State peremptorily required. Theodosius, the last good Emperor, died in 395, and under his worthless sons the East and the West divided. The terrible tale of the barbarians during the third century was even more terrible in the opening decades of the fifth. On the winter's night which divided 406 and 407 a wild horde crossed the Rhine and ravaged the hitherto unravaged Gaul. Alaric the Visigoth plundered Italy and stormed and sacked the sacred city of Rome in 410. His tribesmen crowded into Italy and Spain there to settle. This terrific tempest lasted five years, and when it passed by it left the Empire wrecked as it had never been wrecked before. Of all the disasters the sack of Rome was not the most grievous. The Goths retreated at once, and in a few weeks city life resumed its wonted ways. Here and there ruins remain as memorials of a dreadful night, yet, as St. Augustine feelingly remarks, none troubled themselves further about the incident. He himself was suddenly pierced to the heart by a conviction of the frailty of civilisation, the delicate tissue of human progress. The grave issue lay not in the City of the Seven Hills: it lay in the provinces. The great raid of 407 stamped into fragments Roman administration in Gaul. Visigothic leaders replaced Roman, and effective Roman rule in western Europe ceased for ever.

For more than two centuries the struggle with the barbarians had lasted, a time that seemed interminable to generation after generation. Mr. Toynbee dwells on the challenge given to a country by the very blows calculated to weaken it. Still, the blows may last so long as to induce not strong stimulus but unbearable stress. Has any State ever been exposed to so long and so severe a strain as that of the barbarians upon the Empire? Is the medieval Hundred Years' War between France and England comparable? We take leave to doubt it. Even the more than Hundred Years' War between France and England from 1689 to 1815 is scarcely comparable, for it was intermittent. During

<sup>1</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, the last of the Latin historians, estimates the battle of Adrianople to be the most disastrous defeat suffered by a Roman army since Cannæ.

two centuries there was scarcely an interval of cessation of Roman alarm even if there were no actual fighting. How could the Empire hold out? Clearly she could not hope to recover from such a sustained set of crises. Is it any wonder if despair was experienced as the Roman witnessed greater, and ever greater, numbers, combined with fiercer, and ever fiercer, assaults? In truth, during the fourth century the Empire was exhausted by its efforts, and after the great raid of 407 it was no more than a shell.

If there was external danger, there was internal. There were the barbarians without, the revolvers within. The stasis, the faction of the Greek State, proved the danger of the Roman. Sir Charles Oman does not put the case a whit too high when he states that from the murder of Alexander Severus in 235 to the moment when Diocletian put down the last surviving rebel Cæsar in the remotest corner of the west in 297, the Empire did not enjoy a moment's respite from the double scourge of civil war and foreign invasion. In the space of sixty years no less than sixteen Emperors and more than thirty would-be Emperors fell by the sword or the dagger. Anarchy at home and invasion abroad left such a permanent mark that with Gibbon we feel more inclined to ask not why the Empire fell but why it lasted so long?

With superiority in numbers, the barbarians were bound to win sooner or later, and sooner rather than later because their weapons were at least as skilfully adapted to their purposes as those of the Romans. Their military machines afford another proof of the inability of the ancient world to effect mechanical improvements. Renan once uttered the remarkable prophecy that the survival of modern civilisation would one day depend on the superior skill of the educated classes in the invention and use of explosives. He could not foresee the arrival of the atomic bomb. Still, his prophecy gives the military reason why the Roman Empire at last fell. Gibbon noticed the deterioration of discipline in the army as a main cause of the fall of the Empire, a deterioration partly due to the Germans and Sarmatians, Moors and Persians, Arabs and Armenians in its ranks. The centurion was true to type when he said to one man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh. Men of the German breed were not imbued with this spirit. The free spirit, impatient of control, animated the Teuton in his forest home, and refused to be cowed in the camp of the legions. Forced to take account of it, Septimus Severus allowed the soldier to marry. It was a remarkable innovation, fraught with consequence for the future of civilisation. It affected the *esprit de corps* of the old army in allowing an individualism with which it had not been familiar. The old feeling had bound the army to the interests of a dynasty and the soldier kept faith with a Caligula or a Nero, but in the presence of increasing German recruits this old feeling gradually vanished. The new feeling was critical of the Emperor to whom the recruit had sworn allegiance. From criticism to agitation, from agitation to revolt—these were steps taken with little regard for the sanctity of the Roman military oath. In fact, the connection between the independent Germans and the ambitious

viceroy is clear in the third century, leaving a legacy in an age of usurpers and pretenders. The relaxation of military spirit prepared the way for the upgrowth of a free spirit in the army, Roman as well as German. The rebellions and revolts of the century preceding Diocletian and Constantine were the logical outcome. Brooks Adams used to contend that all goes wrong with the world if there is a deficiency in the "supply of barbaric life." The obedient barbarian was lacking.

There were barbarians in civil life. The Emperors Gratian (359-83) and Theodosius (c. 346-95) favoured them privately as well as publicly, and honoured them with their friendship. Arbogastes, Merobaudes, Richomer, Bauto—these four were Franks—and Stilicho the Vandal were consuls and were five of the most powerful personalities of the second half of the fourth century. Short of the imperial purple there was no rank to which a barbarian might not aspire. The direct influence of men like these is not too difficult to assess, but who can assess the indirect influence of the barbarians in soldierly and civilian life? In truth, the Empire became Germanised just as the Germans became Romanised, and this process of Germanisation spent itself on the European, the Latin-speaking provinces, preparing the way for the ultimate ascendancy of the German race. It was a new element, beginning with the barbarian settlements of Marcus Aurelius. For the moment it was one of integration, but was it not certain to lead in the end to disintegration? The invaders never conceived that they were opposing the spirit of Cæsar, dismembering his Empire. In spite of this, the dismemberment began in the days of the Stoic Emperor, and moved towards such culminations as the battle of Adrianople in 378 and the fatal raid of 407. The tragedy of Imperial Rome, enacted on the stage of a Europe poised between two worlds, one dead and the other unable to be born, is a sordid rather than a splendid theme, and we do not greatly wonder that Gibbon was eager to turn away from too close a view of it.

The Roman Empire sometimes reminds us of the position of a Dutch farmer with grave heart disease. He has to guard his dykes, for if he does not guard them, the waters will overflow and destroy the fruits of his labours. If he guards them efficiently, his heart will give way through his exertions. What is he to do? His dilemma was that of the Roman Empire, faced with dangers at the centre and at the circumference. Many causes may be assigned for the fall of the Empire, yet, in spite of Rostovtzev's contrary opinion, the storm and stress due to the barbaric attack prolonged through two centuries is among the potent factors of its final wreck. Is it possible to regard this long attack as the salvation of freedom? For the barbarians introduced a new spirit into the army. They smashed the cake of custom, as Bagehot termed it, and in the issue they smashed the caste system which officialdom had devised in soldierly and civilian life. Thereby they destroyed the hardening of institutions into the rigid shell that proves the gravest of hindrances to the development of life. China surrounded herself by a dead wall on her frontier. Rome surrounded herself by a living wall of men. For centuries China sank into a stationary condition. Rome was fast

sinking into a similar condition till the barbarian swooped down upon her. The barbarian, little as he intended it, saved the Empire from the stationary state.

Roman civilisation ceased after the raid of 407. It had performed a magnificent work for mankind, and was by its great tradition to continue it. Thanks to the barbarian, its authority and discipline could not sufficiently harden till it had transformed the peoples of the Empire into a caste. For a time the caste stage was necessary. Tennyson points out:

God fulfils himself in many ways  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

A good custom was corrupting the world. The Empire could not save civilisation because it came to regard its safety as of more worth than the salvation of its subjects. The Church could not succour civilisation as yet because its virtues were at least as passive as active, and the active virtue of the individual is vital for the future of civilisation. It was, unlike the Empire, full of promise for the distant future. There is so much that is ignoble in the world that it is extremely hard for the noble ever to emerge, and the Church assisted in its emergence. The world of the fourth century, in spite of the barbarian, was dominated by the Empire, and nothing and no one counted beside it. The Church claimed official recognition and was accorded it. It was, therefore, no longer possible for the Empire formally to claim to cover the whole life of its subjects. From this angle of approach it did not matter much whether the Church gained here or lost there from the Empire when reason and experience justified it. The all-important matter is that there is an alternative claim before men, for the Church claimed to cover the spiritual life of all men. Once there is an alternative to the universal Empire in the universal Church, tyranny is permanently impossible. The individual can at last emerge. Totalitarianism of an Empire in the fourth or the twentieth century and totalitarianism of the Church of the Middle Ages are the enemies of the liberty of the individual, and, accordingly, are the enemies of civilisation as well.

### CHAPTER III

## THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY IN LAW AND LIFE

### (1) *The Pervasiveness of Roman Law*

THE greatest triumph Rome ever achieved was the formulation of her law which bestowed upon the individual security for the protection of his life and labour. The barbarians destroyed the political sovereignty of Rome: they were unable to destroy her legal supremacy. The codes the barbarians themselves adopted bore visible signs of the labours of the

jurists of Rome. No doubt at times Roman law seemed to die, and during the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth centuries it fell into such oblivion that men did not suspect its existence. When men spoke of its *Digest* they meant the Bible. The eleventh century saw the beginning of its revival; the twelfth witnessed its growth; the thirteenth garnered the results of its development. The Roman code was the inspiration of the legal systems of the West with the signal exception of England. Its influence is written over the law of contract in Europe. It dominated the south of France till the Civil Code of 1804; it remained the common law of Germany down to the promulgation of the Civil Code of 1900. For eighteen hundred years in the majority of its fragments, for fourteen hundred years in its latest recension, it continued to rule the world.

Let us see of what this code consisted. In the sixth century Justinian had gathered his Code of laws—no less than 4,652 of them—his *Digest* or the *Pandects*, his *Institutes* bringing up to date the *Commentaries* of Gaius of the second century, and the *Novels*, his later legislation. Others had compiled these documents, but his name is written all over them. In fact, without the *Digest* the world as we know it would not exist. Roman law died for four centuries, springing into life in the strongly legalist twelfth century. The princes saw in the *Digest* a ready solution of the new complex matters of their generation. The work of Justinian proved to be the secular Bible of Christendom. Within the covers of the *Corpus Iuris*, he insisted, lies an answer to every legal difficulty which could possibly arise to vex the souls of his subjects. Its reasonableness and its lucidity enhanced its usefulness: so did its exactitude and logical coherence. The thirteenth century lawyer read not the Latin of a silver age in the *Digest*: he read legal language that charmed his ear as much as it won his head. Its terseness and its neatness he could strive to copy, but could he quite succeed in doing so? Besides, where it was fragmentary, the difficulty of piecing together the fragments of a great age bestowed upon it the fascination of an intellectual puzzle.

Roman law bore on its face the claim to come from an empire that was world-wide. It was the law of no one nation but of all nations, of all men, a Law of Nature in the eyes of everyone, and accordingly a Law of God. The Italian lawyers were not slow to extol the merits of their great system. Azo of Bologna (d. 1200) painted the professor of civil law as one with the authority of an apostle, judging the tribes and the nations of the earth. His colleagues in England, France, and Germany were ready to ponder Roman law, just as an Englishman of our day will ponder the decisions of an American court and vice versa. As we may think of "the common law" as common to mankind, so our forefathers could think of a law common to all, and beyond question the *leges* belonged to this type.

Roman law spoke of a world-wide sway. It also spoke of a past which men were proud to contrast with the present. Take the case of Spain. There the *Siete Partidas*, modelled on the seven years of the legal curriculum in the Roman law schools, was the badge of defiance of the Christian to the rule of the hated Saracen. Society in general



bowed before the sanctions of the *Corpus Juris*. Law and lawyers became the strongest supporters of the Empire, and stood it in good stead when it resisted the claims of the Papacy; for was not the law a double-edged weapon with which the Emperor might smite both Pope and feudal power? "The pleasure of the prince has the force of law," is a well-known maxim of the *Institutes*, and it is easy to see how admirably it suited the despotism of the Empire. It no less admirably suited the growing authority of the Prince in the thirteenth century. The Emperor had been the originator and the interpreter of law. With him lawgiving is the outcome of his will. It follows that the sovereign is not bound by law (*legibus solutus*), for law is the creature of his will. Royal power undoubtedly gained by the spread of the rigid conceptions of order and subordination contained in the *Pandects*. Authority must bind people into a corporate whole before one man can possess himself in peace.

## (2) *The Growth of Canon Law*

Beside the law of Cæsar stood the law of God. Bologna possessed a great university, and it was fitting that a monk of that ancient city, Gratian, should publish, between 1139 and 1142, the *Concordia discordantium sanorum* which men came to know as the *Decretum Gratiani*, or more simply the *Decretum*. What Justinian achieved for secular affairs, Gratian achieved for sacred. As his influence spread he founded a school of lawyers trained in this law, who studied the *Decretum* as they studied the *Digest*. Some of them, like Alexander III and Innocent III, Gregory IX and Innocent IV, wore the papal tiara, and systematised Canon law. In 1234 Gregory IX gathered a great collection of papal decretals which transformed them into a statute book. In 1298 Boniface VIII gathered another collection of the decretals issued since 1234, which became authoritative.

Wide as the sway of Roman law was, it met with the rivalry of the Common Law of England. Canon law brooked no such rivalry for it covered England as well as Europe. It was broader too in its scope than its rival. For it rewrote the law of marriage and divorce; it adopted the proof by compurgation in penal cases; and it owed a heavy debt to Roman law, borrowing the greater part of its all-important procedure. In truth, the canonist was ever ready to eke out the *Decretum* by the *Digest*. With the growth of Canon law there accompanied it a corresponding growth in the pretensions of its expounders, and by the thirteenth century the canonists were aware of the greatness of their own system, and were conveniently forgetting the greatness of the Roman system. The conflict between the Papacy and the Empire ever deepened the contrast between the two systems, compelling the canonist to insist on the superiority of his own code. By the end of the thirteenth century the canons provided all that was required for a thorough system of organisation of the Church. They regulated in complete detail the life and position of the hierarchy of clerks, and they reduced the laity

to a condition of passive obedience. At the apex of the ecclesiastical pyramid stood the Roman Pastor who ruled over the whole Church. The Canon law with its Pope, *qui omnia iura habet scrinio pectoris sui*, was absolutist enough to satisfy its staunchest adherent.

Canon law, Roman law, and Barbarian law exercised authority in Europe, though the last was fast disappearing before the growing power of the other two. The forms of government might change, but Roman law and Roman tradition dominated the life of the citizen. He was resolute in preserving his independence against the attacks of the Hohenstaufen Emperors. His political renaissance was only another aspect of his legal. Behind his renaissance lay his religion, for "where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Nor did he forget that the law of Rome proudly protected the freedom of the individual citizen. Its weakness lay in the fact that, while insisting on his rights, it forgot that they involved duties towards others. The weapon the individual forged for his struggle with the Empire lay partly in his religion, partly in the legal literature of Rome.

Wherever teachers travelled, they drove home to the minds of men the supremacy of law and the rights of the individual secured by this supremacy. Justinian taught the natural equality of all men, and he taught the sovereignty of the people. Perhaps the Emperor paid only lip-service to these far-reaching conceptions, but he paid such service. To say the least, the moral ideas of Civil and Canon law were not unlike, and both in the last resort recognised the world of the individual. In many centres of legal learning men lectured on Canon as well as Roman law. The Lord Justinian claimed homage from men, and right gladly they paid it. Jurists like him acknowledged the due place of the individual. They also acknowledged the place of the State. They were not necessarily imperialist in their outlook, and indeed Placentinus proved himself a stout supporter of the Guelfs. Notwithstanding, the turn of their mind was imperialist. They stood on the side of the Emperor against the feudal lords or even against the Papacy itself.

### (3) *The Spread of Roman Law*

Frenchmen attended the Bolognese school, and on their return home they strengthened the attraction Roman law possessed for them. The brilliant glossator, Placentinus, forsook Bologna for Montpellier where he founded a famous law school, and in 1230 lecturers and lectured began to multiply. He was fortunate in the situation of his new home, for it lay in the heart of the *pays de droit écrit*, the region dominated by the Corpus Iuris. We read the *Coutume de Beauvoir*, and at times we might be reading the *Institutes* of Ulpian or of Justinian. The latter tells us: "The prince's decision has the force of law; inasmuch as by the royal law passed concerning his authority the people has invested him with the whole of its own authority and power." The first part of this famous statement indicates imperial authority while the second

indicates popular power. The two principles run back to the earliest period in Roman history when the government of the city consisted of patres and people. From it comes the celebrated formula S.P.Q.R. (*Senatus populusque Romanus*). In the *Coutume de Beauvoir* we witness this twofold aspect. On the one hand, we read that the King issues "*établissements*" and his people obey them. He possesses "ordinary" jurisdiction over all men in his kingdom, for all laws, which belong to the crown and the lay authority and the temporal sword, are in his hands. In these matters Canon law must stand to the one side. The Church cannot hold the "two swords" of temporal and spiritual power. The State as certainly holds the one—more certainly in fact—as the Church does the other. The secular court may help the sacred—if the latter asks aid "*benignement*." On the other hand, we also read in the *Coutume de Beauvoir* that the Count of Clermont, and even the King of France, is bound to obey custom and to see that it is obeyed. No doubt the King can issue "*établissements*" but he does so for the common good "*par très grant conseil*," though Beaumanoir nowhere explains the constitution of this body. Originally all men were free and of the same freedom. Are we not all descended from one father and mother? If a lord frees his serfs, it is a notable act of charity, for it is a grave evil that Christian men should be slaves. In truth, slavery is as unnatural as Beaumanoir deems it to be.

The thirteenth century bears testimony to the work of Roman law as an international unifying force. By the European scope of its moral authority and of its practical application it wielded an influence comparable to Christianity. It suggested to the different countries the same conceptions of equity and justice, of discipline and authority. Robert Browning puts the matter with pith and point:

Justinian's Pandects only made precise  
What simply sparkled in men's eyes before  
Twitched in their brow or quivered on their lip,  
Waited the speech they called but would not come.

Roman law united scholars in a world-wide commonwealth of thought governed by the tradition and law of Rome. The revival of Roman law in this century exercised an extraordinary power over the political and therefore over the economic life of Europe. The union of this political with economic life is clear in the sixth century. As Justinian was codifying the results of seven centuries of Roman secular legislation, St. Benedict in his lonely mountain was contemporaneously composing his code for the regulation of the daily life of his monks, the great civilisers of Europe for seven centuries to come. His Rule, extending to only seventy-three short chapters, set out a complete code of the monastic life, allowing but little room for the individual. Justinian's Rule, extending to hundreds of chapters, set out a complete code of individual as well as corporate life. It bound scholars in a single brotherhood; it set forth the functions of the King; and it set forth the functions

of the individual. The Corpus Juris has not been the least of all the forces emancipating the individual from the ties of the seigneur and allowing him scope in the activities of the State. St. Benedict consecrated the power of the corporation, bestowing upon it unlimited control over property: Justinian consecrated the power of the individual, bestowing upon him growing power over property.

#### (4) *Papal Authority*

The thirteenth century is a legal one: it is also a religious century, an age of faith if ever there was one. Two years before its opening took place the election of Innocent III, the most successful, the most representative Pope of the greatest age A.D. He had studied law and theology at Paris and Bologna. He saw Justinian as the rival to Gratian, and he was as determined as Hildebrand himself to crush the hated rival. Innocent III aspired to a greater role than St. Peter, for he claimed to rule not only the Church but the world. He forgot that he had come into a new world such as Hildebrand, Gregory VII, never saw. The Empire had been the foe of the latter: the national kingdom was the foe of his successor. Where Gregory VII had faced the might of the Emperor Henry IV, Innocent III faced the might of such national sovereigns as Philip of France and John of England. Strong in his conception of Canon law, he resolutely stood out as a great ecclesiastical statesman whose ambition to advance the position of the Church was overmastering. He restored the papal authority at home as much as abroad, building up the legal machinery of papal absolutism; he protected the infant King of Sicily and he cherished the municipal freedom of Italy. All-powerful in his own papal State, he made and unmade kings and emperors at his imperious will, forcing the fiercest of western sovereigns to bow to his feudal supremacy and the greatest of the Kings of France to reform his private life at his sole behest. All alike, from the highest to the lowest, obeyed his will. He assailed the barons of England; he annulled the Magna Charta. He ordered the petty sovereigns of Spain and Hungary as he pleased. Nor did he hesitate to promulgate the law of the universal Church before the assembled prelates of Christendom in the Lateran Council. His claim was that though the Emperor stands supreme in temporal matters, this only affects those who hold temporalities from him. The Pope stands superior in spiritual things, which surpass temporal even as the soul surpasses the body. As the sun which presides over the day is greater than the moon which presides over the night, so is the Pontiff greater than the Sovereign.

Innocent III cared for authority: he also sincerely cared for the souls of men over whom he sought it. He showed zeal for the extension of the kingdom of Christ and proved sympathetic to great religious teachers like St. Francis and St. Dominic. He welcomed Crusades against the infidel in Palestine just as he welcomed them against the Albigenes in France. He contrived, however, to forget that crusades

employed earthly force rather than spiritual influence. Few have ever accomplished more for the great outward corporation of the Church. His additions to Canon law and his reforms of ecclesiastical jurisdiction strengthened external organisation at the expense of internal life. The keen-sighted Jacques of Vitry perceived that the Roman Curia was so busied with secular affairs that it hardly bestowed a thought on spiritual ones. It was, in fact, the cardinal fault of Innocent III. It is nothing short of a tragedy that Juvenal's words, *propter vitam vivendi perdere causas*, apply to his astounding career.

The great men of the century accepted one common order of religious ideas, applying it to head as much as to heart. St Louis and Edward I, Philip Augustus and Philip the Fair, St. Francis and St. Dominic, Dante and Giotto, St. Thomas Aquinas and Roger Bacon realised they were united in firm bonds of unity as they carried out the same task. Frederick II, "the world's wonder," and Alfonso X, the Wise, also realised it though in differing degrees. These great men inspired the religious efforts of the ordinary men, and let the cathedrals, abbeys, and parish churches attest how warmly their religious enthusiasm glowed. This is the great century of Gothic architecture, the style that is as prominent in this age as Doric is in the age of Pericles. Coleridge defines the principles of Gothic architecture as infinity made imaginable, and the quality of such architects as Robert de Luzarches and Robert de Coucy, of Erwin von Steinbach and Pierre de Montereau, is the very one on which Coleridge laid stress. Alongside Chartres, Cologne, and Canterbury we set Beauvais, Bourges, and Burgos as monuments of Gothic genius. This century witnessed the growing individualism of architecture, for the names of architects are beginning to be remembered whereas their predecessors are unknown. It was also fertile in the individualism of great writers who laid the foundation of modern literature, in the free development of the Troubadours, the Romance poets, the sonnets and the satires of Italy, Provence, and Flanders. Of all the men of genius not the least is Dante who chanted the requiem of the age to which he rightfully belonged.

The century witnessed the rule of great Pope after great Pope among whom certainly appear Innocent III, Gregory IX, Innocent IV, Gregory X and Boniface VIII. They tended to exalt the corporate body at the expense of the units composing it. The nineteenth canto of Dante's "Inferno" or the twenty-seventh of his "Paradiso" enables us to note how far the externalisation of religion proceeded. Men turned from the Church, and the outcome was the rise of the Albigenses, the Waldenses, the Petrobussians, the Gospel Christians, the Quietists, the Flagellants, the Pastoureaux, the anti-Ritualists, the anti-Sacerdotalists, the Poor Men of Lyons, the fanatics who variously appear as Manicheans, Patarini, Publicani, Paulicians, and Cathari, medieval Puritans, for Puritanism possesses as long a pedigree as the Hapsburgs themselves. These men were heretics, if you so please to regard them, but some of them belonged to a type which will lay undue emphasis on one aspect of the truth at the expense of the others. How could any succession of

able Popes, as the century waxed and waned, control the rampant forms of individualism, heretical and otherwise?

The heights to which Innocent III rose measure the depths to which Boniface VIII fell. The exaltation of Church authority by the one corresponds to its degradation by the other. Innocent III had thundered against the enemies of the Church, but Boniface VIII against those of his own Italian State, notably against the Colonnas, his private enemies. To his sacerdotal pretensions England and France replied with a national manifesto. His signal defeat witnessed the triumph of the Civil law over the Canon. The terrible trials of his closing days and the painful privations he suffered at the hands of the Italians and the French killed him. With his death the papal dream of universal monarchy crumbled to the dust, and left the nations to work out their own destinies in accordance with their growing national spirit. From the fall of Boniface VIII in 1303 dates the rise of medieval monarchy. Five years later began the Babylonish Captivity of the Papacy, its seventy years' exile at Avignon.

#### (5) *From Monastery to University*

Just as the thirteenth century recovered the law of the sixth, which wrought such havoc with the aims of an Innocent III and a Boniface VIII, so it recovered the Aristotle of the fourth century B.C. The Arabs in Spain had had their Aristotle with Arabic commentators, but now the philosopher slowly began to return in the original Greek. Plato possessed no logical system that could rival Aristotle, and accordingly the latter dominated the later Middle Ages, supplying the background of the thought of the Schoolmen. By the beginning of the thirteenth century the whole of Aristotle's writings were gradually interpenetrating the mind of the western world. At first he had been an authority upon logic, but in time he became the final authority upon metaphysics, upon moral and political philosophy, and even upon science where he had done work of the highest class, warmly admired by Darwin. The grammatical and historical training that had been replaced by the study of law in turn saw itself replaced by Aristotelianism in its manifold forms. The influence of Greek thought, like the influence of Roman law, acquired a fresh lease of life, telling on the side of individualism. The range of study now received width of treatment, and this width destroyed the endless, purposeless logic-chopping which John of Salisbury had vehemently denounced. On the other hand, it became dangerous to attack the authority of the Stagirite. *Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit*. Freshness and originality, style and solidity, suffered under the dead weight of barbaric translations. Aristotle's *Politics* were not really discovered till the middle of the thirteenth century. Under their influence St. Thomas Aquinas recognised that the State was not merely an institution devised to correct the vices of man but it was rather a necessary form of a real and full human life. The Aristotelian system of the Middle Ages was the creation of two Dominicans, Albert the Great and

his more famous pupil, St. Thomas Aquinas. The protests of Francis Bacon against the ascendancy of Aristotle are the noblest eulogy of Aristotle's greatness. We can, if we like, contrast the orthodox, authority-loving, persecuting Dominicans with the speculative, enthusiastic, democratic Franciscans, and be quite sure that out of this contrast independence of thought received more encouragement than one might at first sight believe. The Dominicans, for example, realised that the more fairly they put the case of an opponent, the more credit there was in refuting it. Albert the Great could state thirty ingenious arguments against the immortality of the soul because he could counter them by thirty-six every whit as ingenious. The restless intellectual activity of man will find an outlet even when hampered by the authority of the hierarchy before which the clergy bowed and the passive obedience before which the laity also bowed.

Intellectual leadership during the eleventh and twelfth centuries had been in the hands of the monks. Clairvaux and Clugny, Canterbury and Croyland, St. Denis and Bec had bred rulers no less than teachers. The torch of learning during the thirteenth century fell from the monasteries to the universities. The twelfth century witnessed the birth of the universities of Salerno, Bologna, and Paris, while the thirteenth witnessed the birth of Vicenza, Arezzo, Padua, Vercelli, Siena, Naples, the Curia Romana, Placenza, Orleans, Angers, Toulouse, Oxford, Cambridge, Valladolid, Palencia, Salamanca, Seville, and Lisbon-Coimbra. Of these the only ones papal in their origin are the Curia Romana, Placenza, and Lisbon-Coimbra. The leading doctors and professors are still churchmen in name, but not a few of them realise that the Church does not attach the same value to truth as they do. They are genuinely adopting a secular rather than a sacred attitude in their outlook, for they are increasingly shrinking from the mechanising of the Church. They feel that its institutionalism is a grave danger. The friars, though they were primarily teachers and preachers of the ignorant or heretical, tended to replace the monks, and we are presented with the singular spectacle of Franciscan and Dominican schools of advanced learning and education. The Dominicans made themselves masters of Paris, the Franciscans of Oxford and Cambridge. Among the Franciscans were Roger Bacon, the father of scientific discovery, Duns Scotus, the one Englishman whom Coleridge singles out as a high metaphysical genius, William of Ockham and Alexander of Hales. The special object of the Dominicans was to put down the widespread heresies of their day, and the Franciscans were not slow to take up this task. For, so the friars argued, heresies could not be put down without arguing; arguing was impossible without knowledge; and knowledge could only come of learning. The individual scholar counted.

#### (6) *The Restless Thirteenth Century*

St. Thomas Aquinas is the greatest philosophic mind between Aristotle and Descartes. In his *Summa* he proceeds to find an answer

for every question the brain of man can conceive. If a fresh query be started, he must find a solution, for he cannot allow the existence of an unanswered query. Without in the least intending it he regimented thought as Boniface VIII regimented action. Cleric and lay must in their turn find their allotted place in the pyramid at whose apex stands the Pope. The individual is not to be allowed a detached position: he must somehow be included in the pyramid. Naturally the active mind of the able man will not consent to be thus regimented. He will insist on securing a place for his initiative. From this angle the friars constituted an outlet for the uncontrolled energy of man. None the less, it is pathetic to gaze at the efforts of the Papacy to regulate the diverse fashions of the friars. Let us, from this particular point of view, glance at the history of the Franciscans and at St. Francis himself, an outstanding individual if ever there was one.

The thirteenth century required a power that should fan the smouldering flame of love and the zeal that love brings in its train. Under God two men mainly achieved this task, St. Dominic of Spain and St. Francis of Assisi. The former founded Preaching Friars, the latter Mendicant Friars. The lives of both were *imitatio Christi*, and this *imitatio* they set forth in the Orders they founded. Machiavelli is not precisely a Father of the Church, and yet sometimes his insight is piercing. "All religions," he pronounced, "must be again and again rejuvenated by a return to their original principles. Christianity would have become entirely extinct had not St. Francis and St. Dominic renewed its life and kindled it afresh in the hearts of men by their imitation of Jesus Christ. They saved religion, but they destroyed the Church." With the work of Innocent III and Boniface VIII before us, it is easy to grasp Machiavelli's frame of mind. The Popes were destroying the Church by the stress they laid on it as a body, and it was the mission of St. Francis and St. Dominic to inspire and invigorate the religion of the individual. Up to the days of the friars "the religious" meant the professed monk and nun, and this title was in fact confined to them. Now it was brought home to all that they might also become "the religious."

Francis would never be ordained priest. He stayed in deacon's orders from a sense of humility, but also from the deep-seated conviction that his task lay elsewhere than in the sanctuary. Francis is the knight-errant of religious life, not of religious thought. He called his missionary groups troubadours of God or knights of the Round Table, while Dominic called his champions of the faith, and all could be troubadours and champions.

The thirteenth century was one of restless activity in the intellect and uncontrolled sentiment in life. One historian discerns in it all the vices except triviality and all the virtues except moderation. The twentieth century dwells on its restlessness, but restlessness is a characteristic of every age to the people who live in it. St. Francis, like almost all the men who have deeply influenced their age, was a child of his time. It was a stirring time—a time of profound changes, social, legal, political, and religious. The whole world of thought and feeling in the



West was shaken and transformed by the thrust of bold ideas, some the new birth of circumstance, others the inheritance of ancient civilisations—Jewish, Greek, Roman and Arabic—now brought by fresh channels into the general stock of European knowledge. Of this vast revolution, wider than the Renaissance, deeper than the Reformation, the rise of the mendicant Orders of Francis and Dominic was at once a manifestation and a cause. There was nothing new in the doctrine that St. Francis thought and talked: there seldom is anything new in the work of a great reformer. As Pascal perceives, "*Qu'on ne dit pas que je n'ai rien de nouveau: la disposition des matières est nouvelle.*" For originality lies as much in perception of opportunity or fresh disposition of materials as in invention. What was new and startling to the generation of St. Francis was his imposition of this evangelical poverty in its literal sense upon all who accepted his mode of life. Only the special mind and feeling of the opening thirteenth century could have moved thousands to accept such an obligation. It was an age of enthusiasms and of impulsive mass movements, of movements often leavened by strong popular and democratic tendencies. Feudalism had already broken down, though traces of it were to survive into modern times. It had threatened to convert the hierarchy into a caste by keeping the most valuable benefices in the hands of great local families, though the cities and towns had risen against it, and in Italy had already overcome it. In those towns the "*minores*," the classes with few or no municipal rights, were threatening the governing oligarchies, and outside the walls serfs and peasants were pressing novel claims against their lords, or against the cities which had seized the former lordships. The Crusades had failed or degenerated, and their issue had discredited and weakened the established system in diverse ways. Trade and commerce had risen to new importance, and the economic consequences of their development had borne harshly upon many classes. Money-lending upon extortionate terms had become a particularly cruel engine of oppression, which merchants and bankers wielded without pity or remorse. Deaths were common because food supplies depended mainly upon local harvests; the diseases which come from overcrowding and from filth were endemic; and leprosy, as the life of St. Francis shows, was so common that the Church had a special rite of awful beauty for the consignment of sufferers to the living death that was their lot.

### (7) *Imitatio Christi*

We have stated that St. Francis was a child of his time, and yet he also stood outside it. A man who is to influence his day deeply must also be able, as it were, to stand outside it and to survey it as it will seem to a succeeding generation. The conflict of Church and State is raging: he stands outside it. There are politics and war in his native Italy as well as in Europe: he stands outside them. There are heresies and schisms: he stands outside them. Nor were these matters merely

academic. The quarrel, for example, between Innocent III and Frederick II convulsed Europe.

Simple-minded as our saint was, he was as original in his theology as he was in his outlook upon life. The theology of St. Augustine, the traditions of the Middle Ages, the Christ of the institutional Church, the Pope of the Canon law—all these he thrust to the one side, and returned to the attitude of the pre-Augustinian Church. He took the life of Jesus as he felt and understood it, and in so taking it he made it his own. Many another saint had done this before him: all Christians, of course, must attempt this task. St. Francis accomplished it with a power and a completeness hitherto unknown. No doubt the breadth and the balance of the Master are not entirely to be found in him, but what other individual has approached so nearly the Christ-like life? He himself felt that his whole life was Christ-directed and Christ-inspired, and that even because of his own special insignificance Christ had chosen him to show forth the true Gospel again—with the accretions that had gathered around it removed and Christ appearing as He appeared to the disciples in Galilee. Christ had chosen him to perform this great work, and perform it he must, be the cost what it may. Childlike simplicity, tender affection, high-bred courtesy, sincere devotion, absolute self-denial—these are the gifts he brought to the Master's service. Such qualities proved an irresistible attraction to the young men and women of his generation, for his was fundamentally a youthful movement. Its disregard of the customary conventions, its romantic idealism, and its spontaneous joy breathed the very spirit of youth. You would not ask him to prove anything, least of all his Christianity; if you did you would ask in vain. He is just a beautiful soul like Angélique Arnauld. Listen to the testimony of Renan: "*Nous avons la preuve que, sauf les circonstances miraculeuses, le caractère réel de François d'Assise répond exactement au portrait qui est resté de lui. François d'Assise a toujours été une des raisons les plus fortes qui m'ont fait croire que Jésus fut à peu près tel que les évangélistes synoptiques nous le dépeignent.*"

Francis was eager to transform his followers into men and women who imitated the life of Christ. His authority came from the fact that God had chosen him, and that he, so far as in him lay, lived the life that Christ would have him live. This note of direct authority is evident in his authentic Testament, where he declares: "My brothers, my brothers, the Lord called me in the way of simplicity and humility, and showed me in truth this way for myself and for those who wish to believe and imitate me. And therefore I desire that you will not name any rule to me, neither the rule of St. Benedict, nor that of St. Augustine or St. Bernard, or any other rule or model of living except that which was mercifully shown and given me by the Lord. And the Lord said that He wished me to be a new covenant in the world, and did not wish us to live by any other way save that knowledge." The artistic genius is as rare as the poetic, and the religious genius is as rare as either. St. Francis was a rare religious genius who translated the ideal covenant into the real, and was successful in persuading his young followers that they

too could so translate it. They dreamed their dreams, like the rest of us, and they strenuously transformed their dreams into life and action. Francis soared to the loftiest heights, yet he kept his feet as firmly planted in our common earth as his followers Fratre Elias of Cortona and Fra Salimbene of Parma.

The mind of the saint was as simple as his heart. His groups were to be men and women who were to be missionaries in the world to which he commissioned them. Unlike Dominic, he had no distinctly intellectual interests, and his thoughts came from his heart. Whatever bore on the love of God and the service of man possessed entire fascination for him: matters he conceived to be outside this repelled him. "My brothers, who are led by the curiosity of knowledge, will find their hands empty in the day of tribulation," he vehemently maintained. "I would wish them rather to be strengthened by virtues, that when the time of tribulation comes they may have the Lord with them in their straits—for such a time will come when they will throw their good-for-nothing books into holes and corners."

Francis was the type Newman loved, the man who made bold ventures for Christ. The thirteenth century was the age of chivalry as well as the age of faith, and Francis was a chevalier. His mind was full of the romantic figures of the past, and he could not believe that the days of these figures had come to an end. Why should not he be a paladin of this world? In time the question changed: Why should he not be a paladin of the world to come? For the age of chivalry was never dead so long as there were poor to be succoured and to have the Gospel preached to them.

Stage by stage, he came to believe in the spiritual Church. Increasingly he so realised the love of God that he believed in His Fatherhood with overmastering conviction. He lived so close to the Father that all created things were his true brothers. He heard a tender voice whisper to him, "Francis, there is not a single sinner in the world whom God will not pardon if he comes to Him." All the children of God, the poorest and the meanest, were dear to him. "A man," he firmly believes, "is as great as he is in the sight of God, and no greater." Brotherhood appealed to him with irresistible force. While he attracted the poor, he by no means repelled the rich. For they too were brethren, members of the family of God. To the poor and the rich alike his message was, "Go, teach. God in his goodness has not called us alone for our salvation, but for the salvation of the people. Do not judge or despise the rich who live at ease and who wear fine clothes, for God is their Saviour as well as ours. We ought to honour them as our brothers, for we all have the same Creator." The burden of his message is that man is to direct his energies to carrying blessings to others, and that the highest form of Christianity wears this unselfish form. If the rich as well as the poor belonged to the household of faith, so too did the outcast and the leper. Bonaventura informs us, "There came in his way a certain leper: upon whose sudden appearance, he conceived in mind an especial horror and loathing. But returning to his already resolved

purpose of perfection, and considering that he ought of necessity first to overcome himself if he would become a soldier of Christ, he presently alighted from his horse and went down to kiss him." But was he merely a leper? As Francis rode on, he looked back, and a transformation had taken place. The leper was no longer there, and he saw in his stead a vision of "the poor man Christ Jesus," a vision he saw ever after in all who suffer and are outcast.

### (8) *Work for Humanity*

We know the form of the reception of knighthood; the white robe, the nightly vigil in the chapel, the oath at daybreak, the bed gaily decked, the priest's address expounding the moralities, the Holy Communion, the catechism of knightly faith; then the oath to keep the laws of chivalry; then the new armour brought out and donned; lastly, the novice bidden to kneel down, and dubbed a knight by his lord. The whole of these ceremonies had long been familiar to Francis, and a spiritual knight he became with all the courtesy and obedience that characterised the knight. His group was in truth an order of knighthood. It delighted him to say of its members, "These are my brethren of the Round Table." To members of the family of God—and all belong to this family—he felt irresistibly drawn, and the love of this family showed itself in innumerable ways, in his courtesy and tact as in his behaviour and hospitality. His love shone through him, and bestowed upon him a singular power of diffusing an atmosphere of peace where differences could not exist. A true knight, he learnt the virtues of obedience which he himself practised. If there were shortcomings in the Church—and there were grievous shortcomings—it was the task of folk like him not to rebel against the ecclesiastical authorities, but to improve them so far as in him lay.

Love released the vast stores of power which, in common with all of us, Francis possessed. From this love proceeded the joy that pervaded his whole being. To some prayer is a duty: to him it was a sheer joy, and in the first rules of his Order he placed as much emphasis on joy as on obedience and chastity. The institutional Church had largely lost the joy of religion, and he restored it. In Francis the days of the infant Church in Jerusalem were renewed. The members of his Order pray and labour, and they are all radiant with joy. Its outward and visible sign of one with a true vocation was *joie de vivre*. *Gaudium, hilaritas, jucunditas*—these are the words that crowd one another in the accounts of the beginnings of the Franciscan fraternities. The cheery and homely, no less than devout, simplicity of Francis, akin to that of George Herbert, meets us again and again in our poets and divines. In this respect, however, as in more than one other, it is John Wesley who presents the closest spiritual parallel that England can show. This simplicity is notably remarkable in one who was, even in his lifetime, the idol of an enthusiastic popular devotion. And this simplicity was the key to his

heartedness. The life of complete renunciation became one of great adventure for Francis and his young Knights of the Round Table. A companion might show a sad countenance, "that doth too often present melancholy and indisposition of mind, and idleness of body every good work."

His preaching echoed the note of joy; it differed from that of all who had gone before him, and found an immediate response in thousands of hearts. It was more like an informal conversation than a formal address. No gloomy asceticism, as of the monks and hermits, was preached by Francis; no crusade against the Church, like that of Arnold of Brescia; no upheaval of the faith, no bewildering and tremendous prophecies of coming doom. His message was the redemption of mankind. Men groaned under the load of their sins because they forgot the cardinal fact of their redemption. Let them believe in the Cross, and the load would roll off their shoulders. What hope for mankind! What good news! The finest of all the *Fioretti* is surely the conversation with Brother Leon on "perfect joy."

To meet Francis was to realise what the life of love could be, and those with whom he came into contact saw in his love the secret of his own life and of his own power. "Art thou Brother Francis of Assisi?" inquired a peasant of him one day. "Yes," replied Francis. "Then be to be as good as all people think thee to be, because many have faith in thee, and therefore I admonish thee to be nothing less than people like of thee." The peasant and the saint could meet in their common brotherhood, for were they not both sons of God? They could also meet in the poverty also common to both. To Francis a rich man was one who lacked the priceless boon of poverty. The appeal of this attitude to the peasant is obvious, and will account for much of the success of the Franciscans. The French Revolution of 1789 and the Russian Revolution of 1917 despoiled the rich: Francis called upon them voluntarily to spoil themselves. "Holy poverty," "lady poverty"—these are his own names—was his bride, and the love of the bridegroom for the bride was strong. The noble and the powerful bore the burden of their riches, and the preservation of their possessions obliged them sometimes to forget the joy of brotherhood. Let them shake off the world's trammels, and happiness would return to them. They would emerge from the prison of possessions into the fellowship of the friars.

Francis's love and work for humanity touched his heart and soul, awakened by God's care for a lost universe. With this love was associated the happiness he experienced in gazing at what the Saviour of humanity had created. By his passion for nature he hastened the return to it that awaited the dawn of Italian art. His passion is more nearly akin to that of Herrick and Blake than to the more academic and philosophical love of Wordsworth. Across the centuries our gratitude goes forth instinctively to the Umbrian brother who has translated for all time into human speech the sense of the brotherhood with all created things which breathes in the *Song of Brother Sun*, and gives to so many of the stories of Francis their irresistible charm. He left the folios of the schoolmen unopened,

and in their stead he read the book of nature, and have we not all gained thereby? If we remember how he begged the lives of the turtle-doves and the lamb as they were being taken to the market; how he prayed the Brother who acted as gardener to spare always among the useful herbs space for a "fair little garden of flowers"; how he specially loved "Brother Fire, who is comely and joyful and masterful and strong"; and how popular belief held that the birds hushed their song while he spoke tenderly to them, and even the fierce wolf of Gubbio was tamed as by a miracle—is it not because we trace here, almost with surprise, a feeling which we had been inclined to regard as essentially modern, dating from Thomson's *Seasons*, a feeling at all events to which we eagerly respond?

Love of nature and love of mankind travelled hand in hand, for with Francis they were but the twofold aspect of the love of God. Riches, honours, and pleasures were subordinated to the love of God transparently clear in his disinterestedness. He cared for souls, and because of this souls cared for him. The monasteries provided for the country; the towns were uncared for. As the son of a wealthy merchant he realised the sore needs of the manufacturing folk, and he determined specially to provide for them. His barefooted brothers were missionaries to the towns, and in them they achieved their finest work. They reached large and neglected classes to whom the wealth of the priests proved as unattractive as the poverty of the friars proved attractive. In the suburbs among the most degraded they lived and laboured, and their patient heroism met with its due reward.

### (9) *The Individual and the Order*

From the man we turn to his Order, though it is vital to know the man if we are to understand his Order. It is no less vital to understand the place he assigned to the individual in religion, and how that place became submerged in the association of the brethren.

After hesitation, Innocent III gave the Rule his verbal sanction and authorised Francis to preach repentance in all places with the leave of the Ordinaries. His hesitation was prudent. A large part of Latin Christendom was overrun by the teachers of strange doctrines, subversive of the foundations of institutional religion and of civilised society, and many of these sectaries won influence with the people by an austerity of manners in strong contrast with the worldliness and the immorality rampant in the Church. There was an individualism run mad. The followers of St. Francis wandered about the countryside in twos, preaching and singing, working in the fields for alms, or begging from house to house when no wage was paid them. They might possess nothing but their habit, their cord, their breeches, and, if indispensable, their shoes. They were not to have churches or convents. "Wherever we are or wherever we travel," Francis repeatedly declared when sending them forth to foreign lands, "we have always our cell with us. Brother Body

is our cell, and the soul is the hermit who dwells within to pray and meditate upon the Lord." He would not allow them even to own books—not so much as a Psalter. Seeing one in the hands of a brother, his comment was, "This will be the undoing of our Order." He had been tempted himself to possess books, but they were riches in an age of parchment and of manuscripts, and to absolute poverty Francis in his heart ever clung as the fundamental principle of his rule.

The world was his parish as much as it was John Wesley's. As Francis was evangelising Europe, his energies directed themselves to other countries. His friars travelled not only to France and Spain, to Germany and England, but also in this age of Crusades to Egypt, Syria, and the Holy Land. The crown of martyrdom fell to the friars who had been preaching in Morocco. The leaders of the Church shook their heads as they learned of such adventures, and a cardinal remonstrated with Francis on this matter. His reply was that as God was the Father of all, His message of salvation must reach all His children. The doctrine of this Fatherhood inspired Francis to send the good news of God throughout the world. Had the Church listened to him, her missionary task might not have been delayed for almost seven centuries.

As some of Innocent III's advisers had seen from the very first, and as his kinsman Ugolino now clearly discerned, it was difficult to understand how a loosely knit body, scattered over west Europe, and already numbering some thousands of members, could continue to live without settled dwelling places, and without the means of prosecuting the theological learning to which many of them aspired. Ugolino persuaded himself that the ideals of Francis must be accommodated to the realities of life and to limits which human nature might be expected to observe. He knew much about the Roman law of dominium and usufructus, and the rigid prohibition of ownership in the Rule was easily evaded by vesting property in the Roman Church, or in other corporate bodies—in England usually in mayors and corporations of the towns—on behalf of the friars. Francis stood out for the letter of the Rule, but his deference to the position of Ugolino and his sense that a large and influential part of the Order favoured change induced him to forgo his own views. He did not like—he could not like—the institutionalising of his Order, but, as he realised it must be, he retired to pray, and seemed to hear God say to him, "Poor little man, I govern the universe; thinkest thou that I cannot overrule the concerns of thy little Order?" For a time the individual, notably the individual in the town, had emerged into prominence, but now he was about to be submerged in the voluntary body to which he belonged.

In the course of 1221 the generalship of the Order passed into the hands of Elias of Cortona, a man of statesmanlike intelligence and resolute will, who, like Ugolino, did much to determine the future of the Saint and of the Order. There was yet another emergence of the individual. For the sagacity of Ugolino is nowhere more plainly seen than in the support he gave to a great Franciscan foundation, the great popular and democratic "Third Order" of layfolk, men and women,

married and single, who lived in the world, and continued to pursue their ordinary business among their neighbours, but who undertook certain religious practices and bound themselves by special obligations. The origin of these "Tertiaries," or "Brethren of Penitence," is characteristic. Villages flocked to Francis, and all the inhabitants, men, women and children, begged to be taken into his Order of Little Brothers. The crowds of applicants defeated the primary purpose of the Order, for its members were to be a group of apostolic men, living and preaching in the world as the Galilean band had done long ago. Nevertheless, Francis could not wholly repel these applicants, whom he begged to remain in their own homes, obeying a simple rule of religious life. The friars had demonstrated that "the religious" were not necessarily those who lived in monasteries and convents: the Tertiaries carried this conclusion a step further. Men and women were able to go about their ordinary work, undertaking certain duties which bound them to one another and to the Church and filled them with a new enthusiasm. These were among the very folk who stood in grave danger of alienation from the faith, and now were most closely allied to it. The success of the Tertiaries was so vast that we cannot measure it, and people realised for the first time in their homes the life and labour of Christ. The third Order of lay brethren did much to revive a deeply Christian spirit among the middle classes and the poor. The beautiful story of Luchesio and his wife shows how real and how tender it might be: it also shows how to meet the needs of the individual. Tenderness, cheerfulness, poverty, the active service of the poor, the scorn of all conventions—these were the marks impressed upon the Third Order by St. Francis, the child of the hearth as well as of the cloister, the individual as well as the fraternity.

The Rule of the Tertiaries brought them into conflict with what the city States and feudal nobles agreed in regarding as the bounden duty of all who lived under their protection. Oaths bound the vassal to his feudal lord as oaths bound the inhabitants of Florence or Siena and of her territories to the Commune. The Tertiaries were pledged not to bear arms even at the summons of their lawful superiors, and not to take oaths, except oaths necessary for the faith, the Church, and the making of wills. The institution of the Tertiaries provided the Papacy with a most potent weapon in its conflict with the Hohenstaufen Empire, but it also marked the development of a far-reaching social and democratic movement which was not always inspired by the ideals of Francis or even always favourable to the policy of the Holy See. It is easy to start an individualistic experiment, but who can direct its course or, above all, foresee its future?

#### (10) *Lay Religion*

The Tertiaries stood for the cultivation of the fraternal spirit which ultimately uprooted the feudal system. There is a story in the *Fioretti* which catches the beauty of this fraternal spirit, testifying how closely



the bonds of brotherhood knit together prince and pauper. According to the story, once Louis IX, clad as a poor pilgrim, knocked at the door of a Franciscan monastery and asked for Brother Giles. The keeper of the monastery conveyed to Giles the rank of his visitor. Giles ran to meet him. They embraced and knelt together in perfect silence. Then, amid the still unbroken silence, Louis arose from his knees and set out on his journey. On his return to his cell all the brothers reproached Giles for his silence. With fine simplicity and with a true grasp of the fraternal spirit, Giles answered, "I read his heart and he read mine."

The Franciscan movement was no isolated phenomenon; it was rather the direct outcome of medieval piety, combined with the new spirit of democratic freedom, that was destined finally to supplant feudalism. None the less, the first aim of the friars was spiritual, and spiritual Francis desired it to remain. Events proved too strong for them, and they became social reformers, and men came to argue that the task of social reform was a consequence of their vocation. The last thing on earth their founder desired was that they should become a learned body, yet such a body they became. Here too their entry into the Universities was a necessary development, and the love of truth and simple sincerity of purpose they brought with them breathed a new spirit into the colleges of Europe.

It would require a very profound knowledge of the history and psychology of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to form a just estimate of the work which Francis conceived and of the work he actually accomplished, and how far he satisfied the needs of the individual by the cultivation of the fraternal spirit. Sabatier boldly declares that he saved Christianity and delayed the fall of its medieval form for three centuries, and undoubtedly he brought home to millions a new and living sense of the Christian message. The age into which he was born was an age of almost universal superstition; he and his first fraternity were so permeated by a sense of the unseen that the supernatural and the miraculous were the friendly atmosphere of their daily lives. In miracles, as in the wonders of the visible universe, they saw the operation of the same Almighty Power, beneficent and inscrutable in both. They held, as true Christians have always held, that repentance and love are the conditions of forgiveness and grace, and they also held an unshaken faith in the need and the efficacy of the sacraments received in these conditions. However imperfectly, then or later, the masses of mankind have assimilated their sublime mysticism, it has never ceased to illuminate the lives of countless disciples. The great poem of medieval Christendom, saturated though it is by the scholasticism from which Francis vainly sought to seclude his brethren, shows how, even when the Order was torn by many scandals, his story and his teaching moved many deeply religious minds. A hundred biographies, letters and *ricordi* of obscure lives bear the same testimony. From Dante, and through Dante down to the Renaissance, and down even to our own day, that story and that teaching have ever been a vivifying force in the art and literature of Italy, and through them a factor in the moral education

of mankind. The harvest sown by Francis was vast. He failed in the aim and longing of his life, and he knew that he had failed. The Order he left behind him was destined to nurture many saints, known and unknown, and to render great service for the Church and for religion. But already it had ceased to be the Order of his dreams and his desires. It had wandered far from his ideals in his life; it was to wander from them farther after his death, but it was always to venerate his memory, always to keep alive in a sordid and material world something of his renunciation, something of his belief in the infinite worth of a single soul.

The Franciscan movement failed partly because its founder did not possess the gifts of an organiser. Man he understood, but did he understand men? Repeatedly at the chapter meetings of his Order he attempted to produce an organisation, but he never quite succeeded in creating one that met with the complete approval of his brethren. He could knit men into a fraternity, and could fill them with such a power that they felt they must go forth as missionaries; he inspired group after group, and inspired some of their members to the last day they lived. The problem of the relationship of the individual to the group had been partly solved while the problem of the relationship of group to group remained unsolved.

Another consideration complicates the tie of man to man. It is a law of mechanics that to every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Such a scientific law is also a religious law where it holds good that the depth of this reaction is proportional to the exaltation which has gone before. The mightier the wave, the greater and the more desolate is the stretch of naked shingle its reflex leaves exposed. Just as history shows that a physical stimulant exacts payment in the shape of subsequent depression, so the moral and intellectual stimulant is followed sooner or later by a temporary lowering of spiritual vitality. The example of St. Francis raises his followers to a height beyond the reach of the ordinary world; but literary satire and the sober documents of history attest that in the fourteenth century their successors had sunk below the level of the ordinary world. This phenomenon is plain in the history of England. The Puritans raised the level of religious earnestness and religious feeling; the Restoration demonstrates the price paid for this raising of the ordinary level. When a dominant idea or a group of ideas is in full vigour, we seem as it were to be on the crest of a wave of life. In time the interest sinks, the power lessens, the fervour disappears, and the whole tone of life becomes lower. Action and reaction are the law of all life, religious and non-religious. On the crest of the wave is St. Francis of Assisi, and though the trough of the wave is an inseparable part of the crest, yet the Franciscans lend their powerful assistance to the heightening of the general level, and at the same time they demonstrate the spiritual heights to which man, if he will, can climb.

## CHAPTER IV

### MACHIAVELLI AND LUTHER

#### (1) *The Renaissance Outlook*

IN the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that new birth of the human spirit which we call the Renaissance took place. Man conceived a passionate desire to extend the limits of human knowledge and to employ his brains to newer and better advantage. The general ferment and the shaking of his traditional beliefs extended to all departments of human thought, even to the fundamental questions of society itself. It was towards the close of the Middle Ages that the enormously stimulating influence of Greek art and literature began to remould the world. Admiration for antiquity became the hall-mark of the Renaissance. The dominant note of the new age was freedom—freedom from the restraints which had been imposed on man's thoughts and actions by the methods and dogmas of the schoolmen, and freedom to revel in every species of activity which the untrammelled spirit of the ancients had suggested. While, however, each man of letters asserted his freedom to his own opinions, he manifested but little interest that others should enjoy the same measure of toleration: this forms a marked characteristic of the scholars of the New Learning.

While men's minds were thus speculating, the grand geographical discoveries of the age assisted in upsetting the medieval preconceived notions of world empire. Men indeed, to use Taine's picturesque phrase, opened their eyes and saw. They saw the physical bounds of the universe suddenly and amazingly enlarged. For the discoveries of Nicholas de Cusa (1401-64) and Nicolas Copernicus (1473-1543) shadowed forth the secret of the universe. The New World, in a sense not far different from Canning's, did undoubtedly redress the balance of the Old. The New World, or rather the New Worlds, were added to the Old, and the conception of an apparently limitless continent destroyed that of a limited one. Men, for the first time, conceived a more correct idea of the globe they were inhabiting. Hitherto they had not even professed to possess any knowledge of geography; there is no mention of it in the academic *Trivium* and *Quadrivium*, which were then supposed to form a cycle of things known, if not of things knowable. Dante (1265-1321) had rendered the conception of Hell very vivid, and it constituted a grave obstacle to the work of the navigator. The medieval mind placed the happy Isles of the Blessed in the mysterious West, and, illogically enough, located the openings into Hell in the same region. Naturally sailors did not adventure too far from land when such a belief prevailed. In *The Master of Oxenforde's Catechism* of the early fifteenth century, occurs

the question, "Why doth the sun look red in the evening?" and the answer is, "Because he gazeth down upon Hell and reflecteth the flames thereof."

A change was passing over the spirit of the age which for a time exercised a subconscious potency, pregnant with far-reaching consequences, on the course of the Reformation. In 1492 Columbus had pierced the veil which shrouded another continent from the eyes of men, and at once the process of transformation began. The centre of Europe had proved all-important, whereas now the circumference assumed this pride of place. As sixteen centuries before, Corinth and Athens had yielded their pride of place to Rome and Ostia, so now Venice and Genoa fell before the increasing sway of Cadiz and Lagos. It was the same in the north. The Atlantic immediately dominated the new situation, leaving the Baltic and the Mediterranean no more than inland lakes. Men had looked both ecclesiastically and commercially to the south, whereas now they began to look to the north and west. The historical importance of the Mediterranean and the Baltic was transitory, preparing the way for the Atlantic coast-line. The time taken in the task of preparation was enormous. From the day of the first journey of a Phœnician ship through the Pillars of Hercules into the Atlantic to the voyage across it by a Genoese sailor, two thousand years had elapsed. It was not, however, the Atlantic that really succeeded the Mediterranean: it was the broad world ocean. Significant as the Atlantic coast-line had been, its significance had been enhanced by the circumnavigation of Africa and South America, thereby binding the Atlantic with the world ocean. The change had been from the Piræus to Ostia, from Venice to Genoa, from Lubeck to Hamburg, from the Cinque Ports to Liverpool, and from Liverpool to New York and the Panama Canal.

Shakespeare reminds us that England used to be "that utmost corner of the West." Before the Columbian discovery she was at the end of the world, and was regarded as almost out of the world. So her position appeared to the Greek geographers and to the medieval monks: the maps of the one and the charts of the other demonstrate this. She had been the outpost of European civilisation, and now she became the very heart of it. Her western situation had proved a barrier to her progress, and this barrier was by a single stroke transformed into the quickest and surest road to progress. Her limited island area, her tremendous change from tillage to pasturage during the sixteenth century, and her unexploited resources of mineral wealth obliged her to turn to the sea. Conditions at home synchronised with conditions abroad, and her maritime development for the first time began.

It is hard in the highest degree to conceive that in 1492 European man had been 500,000 years on the earth, and was for the most part unaware of the existence of any continent save his own. The lack of swift means of communication—the railway, the motor car, the oil ship, and the aeroplane—left Europe in the throes of birth-pains for a longer period than would now be needed. The fall of Constantinople, new

Rome, in 1453 was only felt forty years later in the then remote continent of North America, east and west thus beginning to realise the future intimacy of the union between them. It stirred the Portuguese navigators to a renewal of their efforts to reach India by way of the Cape of Good Hope. As every great movement widens the geographical outlook of a people, it at the same time widens their intellectual and economic outlook. The Crusades effected this outstanding service for the Middle Ages, and the colonisation of America effected it for the seventeenth and succeeding centuries. It is indeed difficult not to speak of such an event as the discovery of America almost exclusively in terms of geography. None the less, the moment the individual completely realised there was another continent where the eagle of the Holy Roman Empire had never flown, the whole structure of medievalism was undermined. Columbus discovered a new world beyond, and Copernicus announced new worlds above. Scarcely any discovery of the nineteenth century, not even Darwin's, exercised such far-reaching consequences as these two which rendered the Reformation possible. What Darwin accomplished in the nineteenth century by his *Origin of Species*, what Newton accomplished in the seventeenth by his *Principia*, Columbus and Copernicus accomplished in the sixteenth. Great men shine and beckon to us, through the mists of history, like stars.

After the year 1492 the leadership of Europe shifted decisively from the south to the west. As Hegel put it, the crossing of the Alps by Julius Cæsar was an event of the same magnitude as the crossing of the Atlantic by Columbus. By both events new spheres were opened out for peoples ready to unfold capacities which were pressing for development. The shores of the Aegean and the Adriatic became what the Breton coast had long been. From the tenth to the fifteenth century Germany had been linked with Italy, that is, with the south. Henceforth the link was with the north, and with this transfer the rise of Prussia became possible. The cities of Germany soon became aware how closely their fortunes were to be bound up with the success of the Reformation. The boll that has sent forth many twigs was once a twig itself.

## (2) *Geographical Influence*

Before the appearance of Lyell's *Principles of Geology* in 1830, science contemplated change as catastrophic. Earthquakes, volcanoes, eruptions, and floods were the phenomena ordinarily shaping the world. For these Lyell substituted glacial action, the slow denudation by rivers, subsidence, elevation, and the like. In the history of mankind the point of view of the individual in the sixteenth century leans to the dramatic. His attention had been arrested by the invasions of the barbarians or the *Völkerwanderung*, or the irruption of the Turks into Europe in the fifteenth century. None the less, in geology the mightiest forces are not the vast ones, but the steady, almost imperceptible, action of small powers. Nature never makes a leap. The individual could scarcely

notice that the horizontal divisions of the medieval world were in process of replacement by the vertical ones of the modern world. There was a contracted world for him. There is a world coterminous with nothing less than the boundaries of the globe for the generations after him.

The results of the discoveries of Columbus and Copernicus are familiar to all, but the part played by the muleteer of Potosi is sometimes overlooked. He was travelling along a steep mountain side. His mule slipped, and in his anxiety to save himself he clutched a bush, which gave way. The tearing up of the roots disclosed a mass of silver, and in this seemingly accidental fashion the metal once more altered the destinies of mankind. For silver comes to Europe, raising prices in a fashion similar to our war prices, making labour dear, and thereby changing the tillage system to pasturage. In the agricultural world men are upset and not a few homeless, and as old ways are irretrievably smashed they are not so unwilling to hear new doctrine as their fathers would have been. It may be, as Gairdner contends, that there was no general hungering and thirsting after truth in the shape of Reformation doctrine; but when is there ever such hungering and thirsting? Still, there is no doubt that the old ways hopelessly broke down, and therefore men like Colet and Cranmer obtained a hearing which, under fifteenth century circumstances, would have been sheerly impossible. The old world which man knew was disappearing, and the old paths were becoming disused. The new world which man knew not was appearing, and new paths were becoming cleared. This is always a painful process, and more painful during the first quarter of the sixteenth century than during any other period with which we are acquainted.

The invention of printing, which was a more important event than the Reformation, gave a guarantee that the work of the New Learning would remain, that new paths could be trodden by all, and not, as in medieval days, by the select few. By 1501 well nigh thirty thousand separate works were in existence and by 1601 not less than 500,000; of these scholastic and religious writings formed an enormous majority. True, the new paths were still considered to require supervision. For the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* in England was established in 1526, thus preceding the first index on the continent by twenty-five years, and that of Rome by thirty-three. Men like Dr. Putnam assume that the censorship of Rome is primarily ecclesiastical, Papal, in fact, in origin. Such an assumption, however, is wholly unwarranted. Indeed the right of censorship of printed books was inherent in the State, simply because the right to print was a prerogative of the monarch, were he king, viceroy, archbishop or Pope. When Charles I announced that "the print is the king's in all countries" he announced the exact truth.

Printers and pamphleteers worked hand in hand. The pamphleteers were international, and in fact there was more internationalism in the Middle Ages, and down to the eighteenth century, than there has been since 1789. According to Sir Thomas More, the *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum*, that stern survey of the state of the clergy, was popular everywhere in England in October, 1516. How much satire undermined

the prestige of Rome is plain to all who turn over the leaves of Sebastian Brandt's *Ship of Fools*, the *Vadiscus* and other pungent writings of Ulrich von Hutten, the *Facetiae* and the *Triumphus Veneris* of Heinrich Bebel, and the *Pantagruel* and the *Gargantua* of Rabelais. Is satire the price mankind pays for the freedom of the individual? Its roll of service includes the assaults of Luther on the monks, of Bacon on the schoolmen, of Pascal on the Jesuits, of Butler on the Puritans, of Voltaire and Anatole France on superstition, and of Bentham on lawyers. Shaftesbury too was the opponent of enthusiasm, that is, of fanaticism, which, like all convictions, he would expose to the test not of persecution, but of wit and humour. These satirists realised the sagacity of this expedient. Their pamphlets circulated on all sides, creating and moulding public opinion. They assumed the corruption of the clergy in general, and of the monks in particular, was a matter known to all. The *Ship of Fools*, for instance, is in reality what Erasmus's *Praise of Folly* is only on the surface. It is a skit on the follies of mankind, whereas the work of Erasmus is, in fact, an exposure of the follies and frauds of those who professed to serve the Church. For this very cause we count it among the forces preparing the way for the Reformation and for the emancipation of the individual. Fortunate it was for Erasmus that Folly wore a mask. The lash of Juvenal or Swift is forgotten in the mocking smile of Lucian or Voltaire.

The writings of the pamphleteers were read, for the sixteenth century, like the eighteenth, worshipped intellect. They succeeded in stirring up the vague idea that there was something fundamentally wrong with the Church. There had been such a feeling in the fourteenth century. The corporate bond, however, had been too much for it, and, in spite of the efforts of Wyclif (c. 1320-84), it had come to nothing. Combined with this feeling in the sixteenth century, there was added the fact that the physical universe seemed to be dissolving. Columbus and Copernicus upset, or seemed to upset, the teaching of the Church. The Church had been shown inaccurate where man could test her: Perhaps she was also inaccurate where he could not so readily test her. Why was the world full of unrest? Why was it so hard to win one's bread? Why were wages decreasing and prices increasing? Why were labourers deserting the land and flocking to the town? The situation was not unlike that of our own day. Something was radically wrong, and there sprang up the idea that something must be done. The last cry has probably given rise to as many diseases as cures. People usually know when they are ill, though their diagnosis leaves not a little to be desired. Something must be done to Rome. Was it not the centre of all evils to the Church? Popes like Alexander VI or Leo X resembled much more the head of an Italian State than the Head of the Church. Why should England, for instance, be at the mercy of such mercenary foreigners? Were not their lives a scandal to Christendom?

(3) *The Failure of the Council*

The Conciliar Movement had failed in the past to effect reform. The growing claim of nationality proved too much for any hope of its success. A General Council had been held on the very eve of the Reformation; it was a failure, as all its predecessors had been. Was Pico della Mirandola wrong in telling the Pope that if there was any real desire for reform, the old laws of the Church would suffice without enacting new ones? Had he not begged the Pope and the assembled Fathers to reform morals? Had there been any result from his speech, which was every whit as remarkable as John Colet's convocation sermon in 1512? Yes; there had been results, but they were not pleasing to any who had the interests of the Church at heart. For the Fifth Council, 1512-17, had achieved the abolition of the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges, the charter of liberties of the Gallican Church. It had confirmed the Bull *Unam Sanctam*, in which Boniface VIII declared the salvation of man to depend upon his submission to the Papal See. It had forbidden, under pain of excommunication and heavy fine, the printing of any books without the approval of the Bishop and the Inquisitor, and in Rome of the Cardinal-Vicar and the Master of the Palace.

Bishop Creighton used to speak of the Reformation as "a great national revolution which found expression in the resolute assertion on the part of England of its national independence." This is only true in part, and is not at all true to the extent this historian thought. There was an assertion of English national independence, but it was just as much implicit as explicit. There was undoubtedly the feeling that England should not be at the beck and call of any State, Italian or other. Combined with this feeling was the sense of dissatisfaction with the working of the Church experienced by such men as Colet, the Dean of St. Paul's. The truth is that the sixteenth-century movement constitutes a testimony to the danger of putting off reform. A preserving revolution in the thirteenth century in the days of St. Francis of Assisi would have averted the destroying one of the sixteenth. Travellers tell us that in Arctic regions a vessel sometimes lies for a long time firmly bound in a vast field of ice. The sailor who, week after week, surveys from the masthead the monotonous expanse of whiteness, sees an apparently solid surface, motionless and immovable, yet all the time the ice is steadily drifting to the south, carrying the embedded ship with it. At last when warmer climes are reached, that which in the night seemed a rigid mass is in the light of dawn a tossing sea of ice-blocks, through which the vessel finds her homeward way. So it was during the sixteenth century. The solid surface was replaced by the tossing, heaving mass. Man vaguely perceived that the old order had come to an end in the State. For after 1492 the nationalities of such lands as England, France, and Spain were forming themselves.

The catastrophe of the Fifth Lateran Council, as it was the catastrophe of the Council of Constance, lay in the fact that national sentiment was waxing while the desire for joint European action was waning. Who,



then, understood this vital fact? Ecclesiastical authority was fast breaking down, and, as there must be authority, secular was taking its place. No small part of the task of the sixteenth century was to effect the substitution of secular for ecclesiastical authority. What Henry VIII did in England, Philip II did in Spain, and Luther did in Germany. The English substitution was fundamentally altered by the Puritans, but Louis XIV and Joseph II can trace part of their pedigree to their German parent. To Luther (1483-1546) as to Althusius (1557-1638), to German thinkers as to Anglican divines, the civil power is indeed a spiritual body. To the reformer the State is no mere police State, no body whose chief duty is to ensure the keeping of contracts. His mind contained the germ of the wonderful conception of Edmund Burke that the State is a divine institution. For, according to the Irish thinker, "without society man could not by any possibility arrive at that perfection of which his nature is capable nor even make a remote and faint approach to it. He, the Divine Author, gave us our nature to be perfected by our virtue. He must therefore have willed the means of its perfection. He must therefore have willed the State, and He willed its connection with Himself as the source of all perfection." It is in truth a conception as old as Plato, and as recent as that of Hegel, and the powerful school founded by Fichte and himself. Society is a partnership, an association for the greater purpose of our being, for the promotion of science, art, virtue. "It is," Burke holds with passion, "not a partnership in things subservient only to the gross animal existence of a temporary and perishable nature. It is a partnership in all science; a partnership in all art; a partnership in every virtue and in all perfection. As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born."

Bossuet was not wrong in indicating the new domination of the State. What the people gained, he declared, in rejecting the Pope was to give themselves a lay Pope, and to place the authority of the Apostles in the hands of the magistrates. That the Reformation aided the cause of despotism is an undoubted fact. Is it responsible for the success of that cause? The despot is as much to be found in Roman Catholic countries as in Protestant. Was Philip II of Spain a less absolute ruler than Henry VIII of England? In Spain the Church was scarcely less subservient than in Saxony. Indeed, did not Spain owe her success in crushing the movement against absolutism to the close union between the spiritual and the secular arms? The French Church was every whit as obsequious as the German.

It is easy to show that the Reformation wore as many colours as the chameleon. It was princely in Germany, it was conservative in England, it was democratic in Switzerland, and it was individualist everywhere. This means in reality no more than the fact that the circumstances of each country modified its outward form. It wore an authoritative form in Germany because Luther was as much obliged to fall back on

the princely classes as the primitive Church had been forced to adapt itself to the necessities of the Roman Empire. For whatever charge lies heavy on the memory of the reformer lies at least as heavy on the bishops who consented to give Constantine authority. It wore a conservative form in England because it offered a special appeal to a class new on a large scale, the middle-class merchants created by geographical conditions. It wore a democratic form in Switzerland because opposition to the might of Austria concentrated strength in the hands of the people. It wore an individualistic form everywhere because, as Bishop Westcott announces, "The Reformation was the affirmation of individuality." Individuality meant movement and power of life: it also meant danger and difficulty in conduct. According to Troeltsch, "Whatever the Ancient World and the Renaissance may have done for the intensification of individuality, Christianity, which, indeed, always included within itself both Stoicism and Neo-Platonism, has always been the strongest influence of all, and the really permanent attainment of individualism was due to a religion, and not to a secular movement, to the Reformation and not to the Renaissance." Individuality did not necessarily mean lawlessness. There was authority, in spite of individuality, in the foreground or the background. None the less, individuality swept everything before it till Vico (1668-1744) first entered his powerful protest against its sway.

#### (4) *The New Individualism*

Fortunate in many matters, the English have not been least fortunate in the spirit of individualism preserved in their literature. If on the one hand the State was growing in importance, on the other hand so too was the individual. Take the medieval chronicles, which were more outspoken and more expressive of the particular opinions and the particular judgments of the writer than those of other countries in Europe. From the days of Walter Mapes there always have been more men concerned with saying what they would than in falling into line with general opinion. Langland was consumed with the desire of an Englishman intent on saying his say on things in general. Hugh of Lincoln gave Richard I a good shaking when he refused to listen to him. Grosseteste hunted Henry III from place to place, as the king fled from the scolding which he knew lay in store for him. English poets, from Chaucer onwards, if we except certain Elizabethan chronicle plays, have been concerned more with the individual than with the nation. They have created their own heroes rather than glorified the heroes of their country. We have no great poem on King Alfred; and Arthur is not a national hero in any of the modern poetic writings about him. Henry V is the only national hero whom Shakespeare chose to glorify, and this was before the period of his greatest art.

The doctrine of the sovereignty of the individual was fraught with weighty consequences in the sixteenth century, and with almost weightier

in its power over Rousseau, and thereby over the French Revolution in the eighteenth. In the former century man emerged from his medieval state of life as a mere member of the Church or the State, and acquired an individuality of his own. The old order had been the Empire or the Church, or, to speak more correctly, the Empire-Church, the commune, the guild, the manor; the individual was always part of some group, and had no existence apart from it. The new order was the national State, the national Church, the statesman, the merchant, the individual in all his protean forms. The old order had been authority and asceticism: the new was still authority, but mingled with it were joy and reason in the whole of life. For a thousand years there had been as much authority in social life as in intellectual. In deference to it in the Middle Ages architects had built cathedrals and had been content to remain unknown, whereas the men of the new epoch stamped their personality on their work. The thirst for glory became unquenchable. Statues used to be within the cathedral, for they were erected to the glory of God. Now they stood in the market-place to be seen of men. Man used to be bound to a bishop, a lord, a municipality, a university, a body of some sort. Now he proudly steps on the stage as himself, eager to develop his capacities for his own benefit, with boundless confidence in his will, his superiority, and his infinite variety. The body dissolves into the units that compose it. There is no longer the Papacy: there is the Pope, who is a lord like other lords. There is no longer the city: there is the prince. There is no longer the university: there is the spirit of humanism. The painter ceases to depict the group: the portrait is his masterpiece. He used to describe in cemeteries the triumph of death: now he describes on the walls of houses the triumph of life. Action was to the Elizabethans, for instance, the main stuff, since man seemed the chief glory of the world. Such was the attitude of Shakespeare when he confessed, "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving, how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god!"

The danger of the new individualism is obvious. What alleviated it was the fresh importance attached to conscience. The most wonderful of all centuries, A.D., was the thirteenth, and it was late in that century, as Lord Acton used to point out, that the psychology of conscience was closely studied for the first time, and that man began to speak of it as the audible voice of God that never fails or misleads, and that ought to be obeyed, whether right or wrong. Bishop Creighton insisted that conscience enjoyed a larger hold over the Teuton than over the Slav or the Latin, and that this formed the strength of the Reformation. "Conscience," he affirmed, "was appealed to as the supreme judge, and the intellectual controversy was only an expression of this in the region of theology. I admit that this setting of morality in the foremost place narrowed the scope of religion, and put Christian truth in a secondary place. I admit that it set up a standard of morality which was mainly dictated by social needs rather than spiritual truth. But I think that

conscience created the form of religion, not that the theology of the sixteenth century formed a morality."

### (5) *The Priesthood of the Layman*

Clearly if conscience possessed rights, when consciences differed there must be toleration for the differences. The sentiments of More's *Utopia* are fine, but they are not a whit finer than those of Tertullian, who lived thirteen centuries before its author. More was not exceptional in advocating the cause of toleration. In the fourteenth century theological thought and intellectual speculation were much more free than in the sixteenth. More had the example of thinkers in the past, and he had also the tolerant practice of the present from 1510 to 1530. He was, however, partly old and partly new. In the latter capacity he thought first and last of truth, while in the former he cared for good and evil. He forms a memorable instance of the truth of Coleridge's aphorism that "he who begins by loving Christianity better than Truth, will proceed by loving his own sect or Church better than Christianity." Toleration was his ideal; but what if it brought evil as well as good, if it destroyed the unity of the Church he loved, if it achieved the disintegration and disaster of his country? When he wrote the *Utopia* he had no personal experience of heretics or the assaults they delivered against life and property. When he became Lord Chancellor, the sack of Rome, the horrors of the Peasant War, and the revolutionary ideas of the Anabaptists had altered his attitude. To More civilisation and order, the order so dear to St. Augustine, were practically synonymous terms. He might hold ideas, advanced for his day, on the distribution of property, the domestic relations, and the like, yet he held firm faith in civilisation based on Catholic conceptions. His mind realised in part the shock given to the principle of authority by the changes initiated in the fifteenth century, while the whole man did not realise that the social system stood in urgent need of reorganisation. Its foundations had been thoroughly undermined by recent events, and the stones of the seemingly stately edifice had received a blow from which they could only hope to recover by fresh support.

To More history revealed a past devoid of radical change, though one would have thought the changes introduced by the barbarians into the Roman Empire radical enough. The revival of Roman law had powerfully provided fresh room for the individual. The living organism of human society had worked almost mechanically for hundreds of years. Its members, its circulation, its nervous system, and a sort of skin, consisting of its laws and institutions, seemed still the same. More was unable to see that a simultaneous set of changes had burst the worn-out skin. Dominated by the notion of unity, how could he adapt himself to the alteration from this idea to that of the ceaseless flux required by the coming of individualism? The law of status was disappearing: the law of contract was appearing. The environment, which had once led to a universal Empire with a universal Church, now

rendered the continuance of both a sheer impossibility. Man was no longer immutable, but mutable; one Empire saw itself replaced by many nations. In its essence the Reformation was individualistic, and by consequence nationalistic. The centre of gravity was shifting from cosmopolitanism to nationalism. It is pathetic to note that More failed to perceive this momentous change while Henry VIII discerned its signs. The noble-minded judge was fighting for an effete medievalism, while the egotistic master proved the friend of progress. The tragedy of More's life—it was the tragedy of so many scholars of the Renaissance—was that he builded not better but *other* than he knew, and set in motion forces whose outcome was to fill him with horror.

These forces were beginning to alter the place of religion which had not so commanding a position in the sixteenth century as in the thirteenth. Like Wyclif, the reformers were eager to secularise the wealth of the Church. They felt that life in this world, and the most insignificant employment, when illumined by religion, had in it something of the infinite. Christian ethics down to the Reformation had a divided ideal. It taught man devotion to others and self-sacrifice on their behalf. It taught holiness and righteousness as the ideal of the monk and the nun. The reformers joined sacred and secular in the one end of human service. Human life, in its innermost being, is in harmony with the eternal law of morality for all. No doubt a heavy price had to be paid for the change. For example, the denial of the honour accorded to virginity throughout the Middle Ages exercised the effect of making the social position of women wholly dependent on marriage. The state of poverty was once the sign of a saint: now it was the mark of failure. A good citizen of this earth was preparing for his citizenship in the New Jerusalem. He was a saved man, and his life on earth was as sacred as in heaven. Other-worldliness was no longer the motive. It had rendered man indifferent to the secrets of the universe, of the ground beneath him and the stars above him. He had been so preoccupied with the Word of God that he had omitted to consider the works of God.

Man had replaced the conception of the duality of life by the conception of its essential unity. One outstanding effect was the emphasis laid on vocation in relation to daily occupation. The *Saint's Rest* was in the world to come: in this he was to labour at his calling. Business henceforth became a sacred office in which it was man's bounden duty to do his utmost *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*. The reformers were fortunate in the moment in which they launched forth this idea, for Europe was about to change from the agricultural to the capitalistic system. This new industrial form gave rise to an enormously potential revolutionary force. The sanctity of monastic life was transferred to the trivial round, the common task. Man no longer was made for a function: a function was made for men. The "religious" were no longer men and women in a monastery or a convent: the "religious" were men and women in the world. Formerly it was *orare est laborare*; now it was *laborare est orare*, with the outcome that a justification was at

once given to social service, the worth of which the world is only beginning to realise.

Individualism in business and individualism in religion marched hand in hand. The reformers rediscovered the doctrine of the priesthood of the laity in the Bible. At once a believer became a Pope with the infallible Word of God in his hand. The Fathers emphasise the priesthood of the faithful just as much as the man of the sixteenth century. Ignatius and Polycarp do not mention a sacrificial priesthood. Justin Martyr points out that all Christians "are the true high-priestly race of God." According to Irenæus "all the righteous possess sacerdotal rank" and "all the disciples of the Lord are Levites and priests." Tertullian, when a Montanist, asks "Are not even we laics priests?" He uses the terms presbyter and sacerdos interchangeably. In the same strain Origen inquires if the layman knows his privileges. "Dost thou not know," he demands, "that the priesthood is given to thee also, that is, to all the Church of God and the people of believers?" He constantly speaks of the true Christian as a priest. According to St. Jerome the priesthood of the layman is his baptism. St. Augustine maintains that "He gives the name priesthood to the very people whose priest is the mediator of God and man, the man Christ Jesus."

This doctrine transformed the world of politics just as much as the world of religion. How could the reformers debar the faithful from a voice in the State when they allowed them a voice in the Church? For if they were fitted to be entrusted with eternal affairs, were they not much more fitted to be entrusted with temporal? As the doctrine of justification by faith bestowed free pardon on believers, their God was their Father. Since He was not a despot, their king could not be one. How could any reformer allow the sovereignty of conscience and refuse his followers all share in the sovereignty of their country?

#### (6) *The Outlook of Machiavelli*

The transformation of the world of politics is mainly due to Nicholas Machiavelli, aided in no small measure—such is the irony of history—by Martin Luther and John Calvin. The sixteenth century is such a century as Time has seldom shaken out of his measureless sack. The Middle Ages embodied the idea of *Respublicana*, the unity of civilisation, allegiance to humanity, and joint responsibility for the welfare of the world, and all these grand ideas were replaced by Machiavelli with *raison d'état*. Columbus and Copernicus, Luther and Calvin, usher in the modern world, but Machiavelli ushers it in far more imperiously than all of them combined.

Machiavelli (1469-1527) surveyed the medley of medieval and modern elements in his world with grave eyes, and his whole life was coloured by the mixture of old and new, in which the new predominated. His interest in the problem of the State is that of a man who studies it scientifically, with the aloofness of the laboratory, in order to ascertain

the methods of sustaining its ends. Behind this seeming aloofness of brain there beats a heart passionately feeling the ills of Italy. He was not a native of Florence for nothing, and his passionless scientific interest in the problems of statesmanship betrays the fact that he can approach the study utterly untrammelled by any Christian conceptions of the past. Classical history exercised a fascination over him he could not resist. With him, as with sixteenth-century scholars, learning made, not for relativity, but for absolutism. Those who had become acquainted with the great classical models were apt to feel themselves masters of a final standard and to try everything by it. This feeling Machiavelli shared to the full. Did he not write a curiously illuminating commentary on Livy? He is, however, so absorbed with his labours that two of the greatest forces of the new age leave him unmoved. The invention of gunpowder and the rise of the Reformation stand outside his ken. Just as Aristotle was blind to the destruction of the City-State, so Machiavelli could set himself the task of estimating the functions of the Prince without perceiving how fundamentally those functions were to be changed by the energy gunpowder put into his hands and by the rise of the spirit of nationalism that was to leave its lasting impression on all the Prince undertook. Because politics had been synonymous with theology, and because Machiavelli was determined to sever the tie between them, he was blinded to the power exerted by such an overwhelming torrent as the Reformation. Nevertheless, he snapped his fetters in one direction only to reimpose them in another.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the age of machinery reaches another stage in its career. Man competes with man as he had never competed before. David Ricardo (1772-1823) perceives this, and he invents the economic man, the being engrossed with his own self-interest. Just as Ricardo conceived this economic man, so Machiavelli conceived a political one. The beginning of the sixteenth century afforded an unexampled opportunity for such a politician, and much that Machiavelli did was simply to analyse his functions. Given the circumstances of his epoch, what considerations ought to actuate the politician? As the economic man divested himself of all ethical considerations, so the political one did precisely the same. Cæsar Borgia had pursued a line of policy. Supposing he had gone a step farther with it, what would have happened? Ricardo devised his ideal capitalist. Machiavelli devised his ideal statesman. He was Cæsar Borgia with something superadded. He was the superman of Nietzsche with the contempt for Christianity the German felt for the religion of the weak. The ideal Prince was to be a statesman somewhat abler and more acute, more audacious and more unrestrained, a Cæsar Borgia or a Louis XI—as Commynes regarded him—if you like, raised to the *n*th degree of power. Machiavelli's three books, the *Discorsi* (on Livy), the *Principe*, and the slight *Vita di Castruccio Castracani*, all mingle the ideal with the real.

Outstanding as two of the three works are, the statesman wrote a comedy, *La Mandragola*, *The Mandrake*, which exposes with the frankest candour his æsthetic rather than his moral judgment of *virtù*, the vigour,

the virility, the Prince manifests in his actions. Its characteristic plot betrays the nature of the age as its author actually saw it. In it we watch Callimaco, who spent his early manhood in Paris, returning to Florence bent on making the beautiful Lucrezia his mistress. She is the apparently devoted wife of Nicia, a doctor of laws, whose one aim in life is to beget an heir. Callimaco meets a parasite, Ligurio, willing to abet him, and even Lucrezia's mother shows no reluctance in aiding him in his scheme. With this powerful assistance Ligurio is able to influence Lucrezia through her father confessor, Fra Timoteo, who corrupts her mind all too successfully with the result that Callimaco achieves his purpose. The writer of the comedy, in fact, dissects society with the precision of an anatomist, and dissects its members as the types of people with whom he was in constant contact. For Machiavelli's own private pleasures were sometimes sordid. He describes parasites and procurers, adulterers and assassins, with no ethical repugnance, for he feels none. Were they not men and women with whom he mixed? The audience watched this comedy with no shock of surprise, and freely accepted it as a true picture of contemporary manners. Leo X watched the performance of this play with marked approval. What won his heart was the exposure of Fra Timoteo, for he hated the monks as heartily as Cardinal Manning—though for entirely different reasons—did the Jesuits he met in London. This comedy mirrors the condition of Roman morals: it mirrors the fact that the attitude of *Il Principe* to morality is precisely that of *La Mandragola*, which exhibits the innermost belief of its author. It also reflects an age of the deepest depravity from the Pope to the politician, a generation destitute of beauty and goodness, of honesty and humanity, as motives in public life. *Il Principe* and *La Mandragola* essentially stand together in their outlook, the absence of ethical purpose alike marking them both. Accordingly, the man who wrote the comedy, and the man who wrote a manual of statecraft, are not two men, but fundamentally one who is as immoral as cynical in his diagnosis of the troubles of his time.

Machiavelli sought the creation of a national militia. His *L'Arte della Guerra* betrays at every turn that its author was not a soldier. Take, for instance, his rooted disbelief in the efficacy of firearms, his contempt for cavalry with three centuries of history as a mighty battle force before it, and his preference for the cross-bow to the horsed arquebusier. This worthless work, however, betrays the patriotic soul of the man whose energies are absorbed in distributing arms, enrolling infantry, and generally stirring up the warlike enthusiasm of his fellow citizens. The members of the militia must be honest and well-conducted men. Their captains must be born to instruct and born to command. Their moral character is not a matter to be taken into account. Indeed goodness of heart might prove a hindrance in actual warfare. For such a captain, might not execute those acts of ruthlessness which he—as well as the statesman—is obliged to execute. Now we must not misunderstand Machiavelli's meaning. In private life he genuinely admired virtue, and his own life was not altogether out of keeping with this frank



admiration. But for him, as indeed for the men of the Renaissance, virtue was a matter entirely for the individual. To such men there was no connection between the private conscience of the man and the public conscience of the State which he served. Such a connection implies the conception of a social personality, that the State is a self-governing unit, and that its members realise themselves in its unity. Not one of these ideas entered the mind of Machiavelli.

As Florentine Secretary he was quite certain that new laws were to be found in the will of the Prince. Given such a fresh presupposition, how could he entertain the notion of public morality? Many a time Machiavelli had gazed at the cathedral of his native city. Brunelleschi's dome crowns it, and in it he united the diversity of Gothic and Oriental elements harmoniously. The work of the statesman was the exact opposite of Brunelleschi. Michael Angelo won his colossal figure of David from shapeless marble. Wholly nude, this youth presents himself as energy and simplicity personified. Machiavelli's State was as nude ethically as his *Mandrake* or Michael Angelo's "David." As this statue inaugurated a real revolution in art, so *Il Principe* inaugurated a real revolution in the art of politics. Both destroyed every medieval tradition and every conventional form. As the gigantic figure of David led the way for the sculptor, so the no less gigantic figure of the Prince led the way for the politician. Neither craftsman dreaded any obstacle in the way of his artistic or political designs. Machiavelli's faith in his statesmanlike conceptions was as unshakable as Michael Angelo's faith in his æsthetic conceptions. Nor is it amiss to point out that his religion of the State is for him who has no other.

### (7) *The Omnipotent State*

To Machiavelli, as to Guicciardini (1483-1540), the cyclical theory of events commended itself warmly. They both held that the past shed light on the present in general, and that the past of Rome shed light in particular. It was this view of history that induced the Florentine to ponder the books of Livy. The Renaissance was the birth anew of the classical past, and it exerted its potency resoundingly when it persuaded Machiavelli and Guicciardini that republics like Sparta, Athens, and, above all, Rome are preferable to monarchy. The classical State, whether of Greece or Rome, exalted country at the expense of citizen, who could realize his existence only in the corporate life.

Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* teaches that private vices are public benefits. More clear-sighted than Mandeville, Machiavelli perceived that the individuality of the Italian—*il suo particolare*—threatened the ruin of the State. His egotism, combined with his lack of morality, left but poor material for the Prince to erect the foundation of his polity. At the very time when Luther was feeling the bitterness of the truth that man's nature owns a deep tinge of original sin, Machiavelli was making

a similar discovery. Of the connection between the two aspects of man's nature as an egotist and as a sinner, Machiavelli, with his deep distrust of theology, entertained no idea. On the one hand he noted the egotism of the individual, issuing in selfishness; on the other hand he also noted public good, issuing in little. Was not the remedy plain? There must be force to coerce egotism and evil, and this force the Sovereign must forthwith exercise. Pagan to the core, Machiavelli exalted the spirit of antiquity above that of Christianity. He hated the Papacy with a passion that would do discredit to a bitter Protestant. Virtue never meant to him the Christian sense of goodness; it always means courage and energy for evil as much as for good, remorseless vigour and virility. *Virtù*, *Fortuna*, and *Necessità* constituted the new trinity which was also to be the trinity of Nietzsche. *Virtù*, *Fortuna*, and *Necessità* issued in glory. Did not man value glory more than aught else in the world? Did not glory, and glory only, render him immortal and like unto the gods? Man, he stoutly maintained, preferred infamy to oblivion, for at least infamy served to transmit his name to posterity. He used to repeat with keen enthusiasm what was to be the encomium of Gino Capponi (1792-1876) upon "those who loved their country better than the safety of their souls." "Let us be Venetians first," declared Father Paolo Sarpi, "and Christians after," a sentiment sufficiently akin to the mind of Machiavelli.

Heine taught that as is a man, so is his God. As is a man, so is his State, is the teaching of Machiavelli. In the last resort the State is the citizens composing it. Of these Machiavelli takes as low a view as Hobbes himself, but is this view wholly justified? Admittedly man is selfish, seeking his own pleasure, but does he never seek the pleasure of others? It is not the amorality of Machiavelli which so wearies us. It is the corruption; it is the absence of spiritual struggle, which means absence of conviction and absence of heart. He has taken sailing across the ocean to be the same thing as sounding its depths. Realist as he is, Machiavelli recognises that man is patriotic, and patriotism and pleasure are not invariably boon companions, for patriotism costs pleasure. Man strives with his fellow man, but does he not also co-operate with him? He is near to the beast, but is he not also near to the angel? *Raison d'état* will never cover his noble aspirations. Machiavelli himself lived in a seemingly unchanging physical world, and yet its foundations were fundamentally undermined. Progress was abroad but it was veiled from his eyes. He saw things as they were: he never attempted to see them as they might be. Man is a faith-maker as well as a faith-breaker. The will to power is the key to human nature for Machiavelli as for Nietzsche, but is it the only key? The champion of a solution believes that his key fits every door and no other key fits any, but there are many doors and many keys.

The central feature of the *Discorsi*, no less than of *Il Principe*, is the foundation and the formation of the State. In the Middle Ages there had been many liberties, but no liberty—that is, there were class liberties of the lords, the squires, the citizens and the clergy, but there was no

liberty common to these four classes. From this angle there were estates but no State, no body uniting all living on the same soil. Machiavelli was determined that, so far as one thinker could, he would put an end to the conception of estates of the realm and replace it by that of the unitary State.

For the Italian the prime test of statesmanship is success, and, tried by this test, the Romans emerge from it triumphantly. They aimed at creating comrades, not subjects, when they conquered a people, and "it was the more praiseworthy in them, inasmuch as they were the first to adopt it; they had no predecessors on that road, nor was their example afterwards copied by others." Machiavelli had violently broken away from the past, but he was never able to contrive a complete severance. He belonged to the class of political philosopher who destroys more than he creates. He destroyed the medieval notion of the *Respublicana Christiana* without quite creating one in its place. Who can be both destroyer and creator? The difficulty of combining both tasks enables us to understand why Machiavelli is more anxious to study the methods of the preservation of the State than to set out its theory. Under his circumstances nothing else was open to him, and it is little short of amazing that he accomplished his labour so unmistakably. The generations come and the generations go, and Machiavelli remains a permanent factor, not waning but, if anything, waxing. No man has yet captured for his daily guidance the light that never was on sea or land.

### (8) *The End and the Means*

That history repeats itself is a fundamental assumption with a believer in the cyclical theory. That it repeats itself with just the tiny shade of alteration that makes all the difference is an assumption not quite so familiar to him. The character of man remains: accidents alter. The far-seeing man can note accidents in the past like those of the present, and given the sameness of man he can divine what under the circumstances he will do—nay, what he *must* do. For there is a species of historic fatalism in all that Machiavelli writes. In the *Discourses* and in *The Prince*, in his poems and comedies, notably in the *Mandragola*, in fact in every line he writes, we always hark back to the notion that men are essentially the same in all ages. A thousand times we learn that as it was in the beginning with the character of man, so it is now, and ever shall be, world without end. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*. Society is static, never dynamic, yet by the irony of fate he was living in a radically dynamic world. New moral forces were potent, but to him they were impotent. Man is unable to climb above the level of his baser self, as water is incapable of rising above its source. Perhaps men of our generation are too apt to take for granted that man continually changes under the influence of laws and institutions, the customs and manners of society. There is, however, an innate

conservatism in us that Machiavelli is quick to recognise. There is not that disunity in the nature of man which he detected. There is a unity, a partnership, in his nature which Burke was to enshrine in imperishable language.

Machiavelli's attitude to religion is Gibbonian. For the people all religions were equally true, for the philosopher equally false, and for the ruler equally useful. Faith, hope, and charity formed the trinity of the Christian. Remorseless vigour, good luck, and stern necessity formed the trinity of the Florentine. Vigour and virility is the most important quality of the State. The institutions of the past did not display these vital qualities. The guilds of the Middle Ages his pagan genius ignores as if they had never existed. Feudalism and the Papacy he wishes to extirpate, for either constitutes an *imperium in imperio*, standing in the way of the State. Roman law was far more to his taste. Between the amorality of the *Discorsi*, of *Il Principe*, and *La Mandragola* there is not a point of difference. The word morality for their author possesses no meaning when man comes to apply it to public or private affairs.

Before the day of the Jesuits Machiavelli bluntly preached—and practised—the doctrine that the end justifies the means. Half-measures he utterly abhorred. Men of his time occasionally hesitated between the adoption of the precepts of Christianity and those of political expediency. He never hesitated for a single second. Christian morality, in his judgment, was absolutely out of the question. He was as earnest in his policy of Thorough as Strafford or Richelieu himself.

Machiavelli was no mere Mephistopheles, for a twinge of conscience now and then visited him. When such a pang visited Machiavelli, as he advocated the use of force and fraud, he consoled himself with the thought of Richelieu: that he had no enemies save those of the State, and that the State at all costs—even the cost of morality—must be preserved. During the first World War Dr. J. G. Hibben declared he was a peace-at-any-price man. Astonished by this declaration the audience breathlessly waited, when Grier Hibben completed his declaration, "The present price is war, and I am prepared to pay it." Machiavelli realised instinctively that he had no *locus standi* if there was not a State, and if there was not the means of its preservation, but if there was he was prepared to pay any price for its preservation. Its theory mattered nothing to him: the fact of the State and its durability meant everything. The author of *The Prince* stands before us, as Hobbes (1588-1679) stands before us. Whatever men may say, they reserve their heart's contempt for the pedant and the hypocrite, their ready forgiveness for the man who refuses to deceive himself and yet in the dim light of a difficult world acts according to the light that is in him. One of the qualities of Machiavelli, and one of the sources of his enduring potency, is that he undisguisedly states the thoughts of his innermost being.

"Where there is no vision the people perish." So spoke an inspired prophet of old. The future lies with him and men like him, not with Machiavelli. For he who builds entirely on what is will never see what

is to be. Machiavelli paid the penalty of a lifelong narrowness of vision. Spiritually speaking, he had no power to use the telescope and he never beheld the stars. He gave up to party what was meant for mankind. Parties come and go, and he who builds Bibles of their fading script rarely sees far. At the same time while we try to lift up our hearts to the level of the prophet, we must not forget the fact that the *sursum corda* is a matter not only of to-day or to-morrow, but of many a to-morrow. The teaching of Machiavelli debases the moral coinage of the individual and therefore of the State, for it leaves one content with what is actually happening, and no idealist can ever remain long in such a position. The Italian thinker, like Aristotle, disbelieved in progress, and we must remember that the State had not yet attained such a moral life as that which greets us to-day. For in the generation of this publicist the State was barely emerging from beneath the shadow of the Church, and if it had neither an entity of being nor a sense of responsibility on the part of more than a handful of its citizens, the case against him does not altogether go by default.

The main strength of the Prince lies in his army, not in his people. The soldiery can repel the enemy abroad and the enemy at home. The nobles are not to be trusted, for they desire to be masters of the Sovereign. The consent of the people is far more vital to the Prince than that of the nobles. Without general good will the State cannot stand. The State, however, requires much more. Might is right, right is might—this is the first and last word of Machiavelli and indeed of Spinoza. The infallibility of the State—for to Machiavelli there is no distinction between Society and the State—means that there is no law, moral or otherwise, above that of the State. Hobbes deemed that in war the “cardinal virtue” of the statesman is “force and fraud,” and Machiavelli deemed the same with the difference that he drew no sharp line between peace and war. The relation between State and State, in the opinion of the philosopher of Malmesbury, was “the posture of gladiators.” It was also the opinion of the Secretary of State for Florence.

### (9) *Raison d'Etat*

*Raison d'état* was strong in the sixteenth century: it is infinitely stronger in the twentieth. Machiavellianism is much more practised to-day than ever it was in spite of the four centuries intervening since *The Prince* appeared. It is a slender volume written so long ago as 1513. The world has by no means finished with it yet. Great men exist not merely in themselves and in their works, but also in their influence, which is often quite another matter. Machiavelli's influence, like the soul of John Brown, still goes marching on. The problems his labour raises are in their sphere as alive as those raised by Butler's *Analogy*. A Philip II and an Elizabeth in the sixteenth century, a Louis XIV or a William III in the seventeenth, a Napoleon and a Wellington in the nineteenth, a Hitler and a Mussolini in the twentieth—all are occupied with the

question of private and public morality, and we may conjecture that to the crack of doom *The Prince* will be a living issue. Men so anxious as were Lord Morley and Lord Acton to blend public and private morality regretfully admit that Machiavelli is still with us. Lord Morley maintains that he "represents certain living forces in our actual world; that Science, with its survival of the fittest, unconsciously lends him illegitimate aid." Lord Acton holds that "he is not a vanishing type, but a constant and contemporary influence."

### (10) *The Union of Machiavelli and Luther*

In order to see how slowly men were ready to divorce ethics and politics it is sufficient to turn to the thought of Martin Luther (1483-1546). He lives a generation after Machiavelli, and he was as ethical and dogmatic as Machiavelli was unethical and undogmatic. When the German dies in 1546 there are at least four ideals before the minds of men. Theologically, there are the Roman Catholic communion and the Reformed bodies; politically, there are the State of Machiavelli based on power and the State of Luther or Calvin based on theology. The tyranny of a single Church, the tyranny of a single State—these had come to an end, and because they had come to a sudden end, the individual at last breathed more easily—if still in danger if he expressed his opinions too freely.

One of the astonishing matters in the world of thought is to note the different routes by which men travel to the same conclusions. To Machiavelli the State is a purely human institution, whereas to Luther it is a divine institution. Differing so fundamentally in their main idea, it is difficult to think of any agreement between them. At bottom the amazing matter is that the outcome of the labours of both was the supremacy of the Sovereign. Machiavelli never dreams of resorting to Holy Writ or the Fathers for proof of his conceptions: Luther constantly resorts to both sources. The methods and the illustrations of the two differ by worlds; the singular result is the unanimity with which they exalt the State. They essayed the same task, each in accordance with his genius.

Scholars, like Denifle, have analysed the diverse and heterogeneous elements in the doctrine of Luther. They justly deny his originality, showing where he borrowed from St. Paul and St. Augustine, from Ockham and Hus, from Carlstadt and Erasmus. They forget that when he made these borrowings his own, he re-created them, welding them in the flame of his fiery zeal. The ideas of Rousseau are to be read substantially in Montaigne and in Locke. Still, Rousseau invested them with the shirt of Nessus, rendering them a burning force. Originality is of the highest importance: so too are the energy and the initiative which oblige men to recognise the leadership of the man of action, who is occasionally a thinker. "*Le cœur a ses raisons*," wrote Pascal in a pregnant saying, "*que la raison ne connaît point*," and the saying is eminently

true of Luther. "*Credo in Newmannum*" was once a watchword that inspired a movement in the nineteenth century. "*Credo in Lutherum*," was once a watchword that inspired another movement in the sixteenth century. For the German reformer owned a genius for action. He united two qualities, religious enthusiasm and that power for action which imposed his views on those with whom he came into contact. His ardent and inflexible soul, inspired by enthusiastic mysticism, gave him an incomparable driving force, whose relentlessness crushed all opposition.

At the grave crises of her history Germany has never lacked able men: she has sorely lacked statesmen, in 1933 as in 1848. In 1520 neither Luther nor Melancthon was fitted to control the forces they had called into existence. Luther was a leader of opposition *against* Rome: he was not a statesman *for* a new order. To whom was he to turn? The thoughtful Jakob Wimpheling was old and out of sympathy with the new school of reform. There were scholars like Mutianus and such members of his circle as Georg Spalatin, Eoban of Hesse and Crotus Rubianus. There were humanists like Johann Reuchlin and Ulrich von Hutten; antiquarians like Conrad Peutinger; artists like Albrecht Durer; satirists like Sebastian Brandt and Thomas Murner; citizens like Wilibald Pirckheimer; revolutionaries like Andreas Bodenstein von Carlstadt; and rulers like Frederick the Wise. Was there a statesman in their ranks? The annals of the Diet show that its members possessed as little experience as the makers of the French Revolution. The truth is the Reformation drifted without statesmanlike guidance from its leading spirit. Feeling with Luther was red-hot, and words gushed forth like an impetuous current, but the brain did not work as if packed in ice. As Erasmus indicated, the judgment of the reformer was not restrained. Gustavus Adolphus, Richelieu and Bismarck perceived the limits within which their tasks were to be completed. It is a rare sense, one of the rarest, and it was denied Luther.

### (11) *False Medieval Unity*

The three most important pamphlets which, next to his translation of the Bible, Luther ever wrote were composed during the last half of the year 1520. These are *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation on the Improvement of the Christian Estate*, *A Prelude on the Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, and *On the Freedom of a Christian Man*. These little quarto pamphlets are now brown and worm-eaten, each with its engraved and allegorical title page. Then they came fresh from that new invention, the printing press, voicing plainly in town and country, in farm and workshop, the dimly felt religious aspirations, and the no less deeply felt political discontents. Luther wrote rapidly, with little care for style and with no ambition for literary renown. He had a message to deliver, and deliver it he must. Necessity was laid upon him. Hence he wrote: he could do no other.

We lay down these pamphlets with reluctance and with the feeling that we have been in the company of one of the immortals who only come once or twice in a century.

In *The Christian Nobility* Luther gave a detailed description of the Roman exactions, setting forth, as Machiavelli had done, the argument that Germany—and indeed other countries—was exploited on the pretext that contributions were required for the administration of the Church. At Rome everything was for sale: livings, dignities, cardinalates, the Papacy itself changing hands for money; and it was always possible to sell pardon for sins. "The Lord," remarked an official at the Court of Innocent VIII, who had bought his tiara, "does not will the death of a sinner: he wills that he shall live and pay." When Michael Angelo was finishing the statue of Julius II he represented the Pontiff with one of his hands raised either for blessing or cursing. The sculptor inquired what he was to place in his other hand. Was he to carve a book? "Place a sword there," answered Julius II, "I do not know letters." The popes of the first half of the sixteenth century, with the honourable exception of Adrian VI, wield the sword on behalf of their Italian States and of the interests of their children. They are chiefs of principalities, not heads of the Church, requiring incessant supplies of money for the furtherance of their secular projects.

Erasmus wrote for princes and learned men, and he scarcely moved the people. They saw that simony was rampant in the Church, though humanistic disputes never crossed their horizon. They neither read nor wrote. They sowed their corn, they planted their vine, they manufactured their goods—and they resented the exaction of the ecclesiastical tax-gatherer. It was indeed as an orthodox member of the Church that Luther attacked Tetzl for the sale of indulgences. Such devoted members of the Church as Archbishop Henneberg of Mainz and Duke George of Saxony felt that Rome was too covetous. The Emperor Maximilian had sorrowfully to confess that the Roman Curia drew from Germany a revenue a hundredfold greater than his own. In Saxony, as in France on the eve of the Revolution, the taxes were light, and this lightness made the peasant resent the Roman exactions all the more. Luther cleverly took advantage of this resentment, and interlarded political and religious motives in the fashion which Ranke regards as the most striking feature of the sixteenth century. Just as Innocent III failed because he found himself opposed to the rising tide of nationality, so Leo X failed, and for precisely the same reason. The fact that he appealed to the Christian nobility of the German nation showed how conscious Luther was that he could reckon on the support of the natural leaders of his fellow-countrymen. The time was ripe, the circumstance was propitious, and his genius bestowed power on time and circumstance.

As Machiavelli freed the State from considerations of moral law, so Luther freed it from the control of the Church. Is it not the duty of the State, he argued, to check and control all forms of combination injuring the welfare of the people? Thus he won the sympathy of the multitude by his stern attitude to capitalism, luxury and immorality.



The claims of the Papacy rested in no small degree on the Old Testament, and in his appeal *To the Christian Nobility* Luther resorts to the New Testament in order to prove the priesthood of all believers. He uses the Old Testament, just as Dante used it in his *De Monarchia*, to attack the claim of the Church that, because the Pope crowns the Holy Roman Emperor, therefore the head of the State is subject to the head of the Church. The patriot and the prophet are impossible to dissociate in the composition of this work. We see rage against the offences committed by the Papacy, and we see rage against the offences committed by it against his beloved land. The element of negation is prominent in it. It is an element not only in the Reformation, but also in every revolution ever made. Did not the constitutionalists of 1789 begin by demolishing feudalism before they could raise the building of liberty, fraternity and equality?

The moral nature of the State comes out plainly in *A Prelude on the Babylonian Captivity of the Church*. Luther claims that "no laws can be imposed on Christians by any authority whatsoever, neither by man nor by angels, except with their own consent, for we are free of all things." "What is done otherwise is gross tyranny. . . . We may not become the servants of men. . . . But few there are who know the joy of Christian liberty," moralising the whole of life. He shows the Emperor, the princes, and the nobility how Germany may break away from Rome, and undertake its own reformation. Are they not all priests? Accordingly, he sets to work to remove the distinction between the clerical and the lay estates. The law of the land covers everyone within the bounds of the empire, clergy as well as laity. His view of ecclesiastical authority, anticipating Bodin's opinion, excludes every extension of that authority to the sphere of political or civil life. Everyone living within the boundaries of any State is subject to its laws, and is not subject to the laws of any outside body. In fact, mediæval unity was essentially false: it was the principle of domination destroying the liberty of the individual, and thereby that of the State. By breaking this unity Luther made possible the era of modern nations. With Machiavelli Luther boldly substitutes secular for sacred authority.

### (12) *The Duty of Private Judgment*

The three pamphlets of 1520 exalt private judgment. *A Prelude on the Babylonian Captivity of the Church* insists that "neither Pope, nor bishop, nor any man has a right to dictate even a syllable to the Christian without his own consent; any other course is pure tyranny." If you have grasped the Word of faith, then, according to *The Freedom of a Christian Man*, "you have fulfilled all the commandments, and must be free of all things": the believer becomes "spiritually lord of all," and by virtue of his transcendent dignity "he has power over all things." With this regard for individual reason is combined the mystical feeling. There exists, he thinks, in the assembly of the faithful, and through the illumination

of the Divine Spirit, an "inward sense of judging concerning doctrine, a sense which, though it cannot be proved, is nevertheless absolutely certain." He proceeds to demonstrate that the Sacraments had been perverted, and in fact led into a Babylonian Captivity. The withholding of the Cup in the Eucharist he calls the first captivity, the belief in Transubstantiation the second, and the third was the perversion of the meaning of the rite Jesus had instituted.

The last great tract of 1520, *On the Freedom of a Christian Man*, breathed the very spirit of individualism to an even greater extent than the tract Calvin wrote on this subject in 1539. Like the *Decretum* of Gratian, it is one of the most important political pamphlets ever published. Man emerges from his place as a mere member of the Church or the State, and acquires an individuality of his own. In his emergence Luther takes no mean share. Alongside him stands the inventor of printing, thereby permitting free circulation to ideas which for the first time entered the minds of more than a select few. Gutenberg rendered the work of Luther possible: the reformer was among the first to use the printing press for popular effect. Alongside the inventor of printing stands the inventor of gunpowder, thereby putting into the hands of all an argument against authority more potent than that of all the philosophers from Marsiglio of Padua to Luther.

Into the ferment of the early sixteenth century Luther's *Freedom of a Christian Man* was the electric spark that exploded the gunpowder. The time and place of a doctrine are not less important than the doctrine itself. As Leonardo da Vinci held, Truth is the daughter of Time. In America stress was laid on the equality of man, but it was an equality to be sought within the existing political order. The war between North and South for the liberation of the slave is no doubt an exception, yet that war was as much fought over the right of a State to secede as over any other matter. The French, more logical than the Americans, turned the equality of man into a vital issue, and with them its propaganda was as intense as if it had been an article of faith. How different was the destiny that awaited the theory of the equality of all, a form of liberty, in France and in the United States!

The little pamphlet of thirty pages opens with the paradox that "a Christian man is the dutiful servant of all, subject to everyone." It is characteristic of the author that he appeals for the proof of his paradox not to Jesus, who taught it, but to St. Paul. The eloquence of the moving language employed brought home to the heart of the people that it was enough to have experienced the power of faith in tribulation and temptation, in anxieties and struggles, to understand that in it lay the true freedom of a Christian man. The spirit of the priesthood of the believer breathes in every word of the booklet as it breathed in the teaching of John Hus. The believer, incorporated with Jesus by faith, receives from Him his priesthood. All are priests, like the Saviour, with whom all are one. The peasant tills the ground, the priest celebrates Holy Communion—that is all. There is no difference between them save of office. In a word Holy Orders are not a sacrament; they are a matter of Church

organisation. There is no monopoly of the priesthood: it is the privilege of all faithful Christians. Inevitably it suggests that a national Church can come into being without being in any wise cut off from the communion of saints or fellowship with the Divine Head of one great body.

The writer insisted, with all the eloquence at his command, on the dignity which faith and a state of grace could impart to every calling, even the humblest. A thought had escaped from the soul that was common to all and made an immediate appeal to every lowly heart. *The Freedom of a Christian Man* is a book of every century, though it bears the distinguishing marks of its own. Luther's vivid writing impressed on all that life in this world, and the most insignificant employment, when illumined by religion, has in it something of the infinite. The German people had outgrown the conception of the duality of life, and found the new conception in its essential unity. Priestly ideals no more dominated men, and a new lay attitude to the world replaced the ecclesiastical attitude of the Middle Ages. The dominating intellectual feature of the last four centuries, as Lecky thinks, is the secularisation of thought. Machiavelli powerfully contributed to it, and, by the irony of history, so too did Luther. In medieval cathedrals there were two distinct churches: that of the clergy with its centre in the altar, and that of the parish with its centre in the nave. The two churches, as it were, now became one. In the first tract of Luther the life of the State was to be one. In the second the life of man was to be one. In the third the life of the State and that of the individual were to be one, joined in harmonious union in which neither was to attain mastery over the other. Work was a vocation. Freedom was an inspiration. Luther indeed restored to the heart the freedom that had long been denied it. We might say of him what Voltaire said of Montesquieu that humanity had lost its title-deeds and Luther had recovered them.

### (13) *The Peasant Revolt*

In the last resort the reformer exalts lay authority at the expense of ecclesiastical. What else could he do? To whom could he appeal save the ruling classes of his own land? To whom did the French and English reformers appeal? Calvin had behind him the free, vigorous communities of Swiss peasants, trained to independence by their contest with Austria. Of course Luther had behind him the strength and the intelligence of the larger German cities, but the bulk of his followers were oppressed farmers who had turned savage since the Peasant Wars. The natural result was the immense increase in the power, not of the German State, but of the territorial prince. The Prince waxed as great as the mind of Machiavelli desired, and the Holy Roman Empire correspondingly waned. Luther sincerely sought the salvation of Germany, yet by his actions he was destined to leave no more than the shell of an empire which crumbled to pieces at the touch of a Napoleon.

In his first pamphlet Luther attacked abuses in relation to the State;

in his second he attacked abuses in relation to the Church; and in his third he discovered the individual, whom these abuses had concealed. With the State and the Church reformed, there was room to live the good life. This principle of moral individualism comes from the German prophet, and proved one of the greatest factors in the success of his movement. Theologically it formed the essence of his message, for it was the doctrine of justification by faith of the individual. He could not believe that a man became just by doing just acts. On the contrary, he came to believe that a man must first be just, and then he will do just acts. The heart must first be changed: the rest will then follow. It was with a shock of surprise that he learned that repentance meant not, as in the Vulgate, to do penance, but, as in Greek, to change one's mind, internal not external. Righteousness is from within, not from without—a God-inspired life of faith, not a formal life of works. It springs directly out of the relationship of the soul to its Saviour, not out of outward mortification. Then, like Christian in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the bondage of sin falls from man when he sees the cross. It was this moral freedom Luther enabled man to realise, and it was this realisation which gave the Reformation its moving impulse. Neither masses nor indulgences were required. No priest stood between the soul and God. That Luther believed in individual liberty *The Freedom of a Christian Man* demonstrates. That he promoted princely absolutism, as Machiavelli promoted it, all the after history of Europe demonstrates. Hitler and Mussolini lay hidden behind him. As Harnack put it, "Kant and Fichte were both of them hidden behind Luther." That he promoted freedom of inquiry is similarly attested, for Ewald, Darwin, and Kelvin trace their descent from him.

Inconsistency is the bugbear of second rate minds: it is never that of first rate. Accordingly, Luther was not in the least afraid of being inconsistent. In his appeal *To the Christian Nobility* he had certainly elevated the civil power to ecclesiastical rank. In his work, *On the Temporal Power: How far Obedience is due to it*, 1523, the task of the State, a word he refuses to use, is conceived to be secular, thus flatly contradicting his former standpoint. It speaks most plainly in favour of toleration, reaching a loftiness of thought as penetrating as that of *The Freedom of a Christian Man*, and this loftiness was not approached till the days of Milton's *Areopagitica*, one hundred and twenty-one years later. The great revolutionary believes that "no one can command or ought to command the soul, except God, who only can show it the way to heaven." He puts forward the plea that "the thoughts and mind of man are discerned only by God," and hence it is useless, nay, impossible, to command or by force compel any man's belief. The conclusion is inevitable. "Faith is a voluntary matter which cannot be forced: indeed it is a Divine work in the spirit. Hence it is a common saying which is also found in Augustine, 'Faith cannot and ought not to be forced on anyone.'" He insists that "heresy can never be kept off by force; another argument is required for that; this is another quarrel than that of the sword. If this fails, the worldly power avails naught, though

it fill the world with blood. Heresy is a spiritual matter that cannot be hewn down by iron, nor burned by fire nor drowned by water. But God's Word meets, it, as St. Paul says, 'Our weapons are not carnal, but mighty in God.' "

#### (14) *The Horror of Revolution*

The facts of life proved too much for More's toleration: they proved too much for Luther's. In the midst of his theories on the world of toleration came the Peasant's Revolt of 1525. Its primary motive was economic. Roman law, notably the clauses of debtor and creditor, weighed heavily on the peasants. The lords' tyranny, the tithes and the taxes had long exerted severe pressure. The message of Luther had forced men to feel their burdens more acutely than they had ever felt them before. His gospel of Christian liberty proved a mighty solvent. For the spiritual freedom he taught, multitudes substituted freedom from legal and political oppression, from social injustice and from economic burdens.

Like heady wine, the reading of the Bible intoxicated and exalted them, leading not to revolution but to absolute anarchy. Its influence was as much indirect as direct. For some of the peasant Anabaptists, like other men from the Gnostics to Schleiermacher, denied the necessity of reading it. We trace as much connection between Luther and the outbreak as there was between Hus and the extreme fanatics of his party, or between Wyclif and Wat Tyler.

Luther wrote a single sheet, *Against the Murderous, Thieving Hordes of Peasants*, composed before their complete defeat in May 1525. In it Luther, like the Tudors, sacrificed liberty to order. In the *Exhortation to Peace* the pamphleteer seeks to put the truth before the peasants and their lords, and addresses each side in turn. The peasants are right in their demand to choose their own pastors and in their repudiation of the heriot. They are wrong in their desire to divide the tithes between the priest and the poor: it is simply robbery, for the tithes belong to the Government. They are also wrong in craving the abolition of serfdom on the ground that Christ has freed all: this makes Christian freedom a carnal matter, and is therefore unjustifiable. The Gospel too is concerned with spiritual, not temporal affairs. Earthy society cannot exist without inequalities; the true Christian finds his liberty and his opportunity for service in the midst of them and in spite of them. His enemies declare that from the doctrine of Luther springs the rebellion, but he avers he has always taught obedience to the powers that be. Those who take the sword shall perish by the sword, and every soul shall be subject to the authorities in fear and honour.

He lives in the moment and takes no thought for the morrow. Sufficient unto the day is the change in view thereof. As Carlyle believed that the skins of the French aristocracy bound the new edition of Rousseau's writings, so the skins of the German peasants bound the new

version of Luther's ideas. Is it not the prerogative of genius to be fertile in contradiction, to nourish its development on inconsistencies? He knew not whither he was going—he did not wish to know. Forces, incalculable forces, were driving him whither they list. God would provide the opportunity; God would reveal how it ought to be used. Had the men who executed Louis XVI been content with the Tennis Court oath, the house of Bourbon might still be reigning in Paris.

The peasant, the Anabaptist, applied Lutheran doctrine. The one-time revolutionary drew back in stark horror from their application. Authority came into the foreground of his thought. When episcopal authority was abolished, the Elector of Saxony assumed jurisdiction as a sort of bishop. As Melancthon put it, he was the principal member of the Church. This jurisdiction dealt above all with matrimonial causes—which, according to Luther, appertained entirely to the secular courts—matters of tithe, certain offences against sacred or secular law, and points of Church discipline touching public order. This was all in accordance with Luther's statement that the Church possessed no power to govern, that the only object for which she existed was to make men religious by means of the Word, that the secular authority was the only one able to pass laws and formally to claim obedience "whether it does right or wrong." The authority it employed was not ecclesiastical, but only the common law operating for the purpose of preserving sound doctrine and the true Church. With these conceptions Machiavelli would have found himself in hearty agreement.

Luther replaced the Pope by the Saxon Prince with the Consistory to enunciate his demands. Were not sovereigns *summi episcopi*? The prophet was not enough of an ecclesiastical statesman to perceive the necessity of machinery for the preservation of law, order, and, above all, discipline in a newly organised body. The Lutheran, accordingly, rests content if the Church of which he is a member assures him of the Ministry of the Word and the Sacraments. The Calvinist wants this assurance, but he wants very much more. For he wants the Church to be the field in which he must labour effectually in order to hasten the reign of Christ, the *unicus rex*. Such labour will be long and stern. Calvin was far too methodical a Frenchman to rest satisfied with talk merely about rights. He proceeded to create machinery for the employment of these rights, and for the punishment of those who violated them. With statesmanlike instincts Calvin felt fully determined that discipline must take its part in the purging of the offender. The spirit of Calvinism is as vague as the character of a nation. The fact of Calvinism is in no wise vague, and one of the institutions that differentiated it sharply from Lutheranism is that it had resolutely determined that it should maintain stern discipline. Men might talk as they pleased about their rights, but Calvin resolved that they should bear in mind their duties. If they did not, then his Council should bring them to their senses. His genius for an ordered coherence had methodised the incoherence of Luther.

As More realised in his day, as Burke realised long after, Luther realised that when a separation was effected between security—the

security of society—and liberty, neither, was safe. Sir Thomas More pleaded for toleration till toleration endangered the commonwealth. Edmund Burke argued for liberty in America: he refused to argue for licence in France. So too Martin Luther wrote on behalf of the freedom of a Christian man till revolt threatened that and much else besides. More was a conservative, Luther was a conservative, and Burke was a conservative. They were three of the great conservatives of history. The practice of all three seemed to depart widely from their creed. Coleridge, however, insists that in Burke's writings at the beginning of the American Revolution and in those at the beginning of the French Revolution, the principles are the same and the deductions are the same. The evidence is not nearly so strong in the case of Luther, yet it might be argued in his defence, as in More's and Burke's, that had his knowledge of the facts been ample, and, above all, had not his experience been cast in such a whirlpool as the Peasants' Revolt, he might have arrived at conclusions far different from those of his pamphlet of 1525. Luther regarded Thomas Munzer's policy of revolution just as More regarded Thomas Cromwell's policy of reformation. Like Joseph II, the German reformer was tempted to take the second step before he had taken the first, but the moment he foresaw the consequences of raising his foot to take the second step he replaced it on the first. He was not going to witness the devastation of Saxony by a spirit which, in the words of Burke, "breaks the locality of public affections."

There is only one liberty, and it is liberty of conscience. All other forms of liberty are its offspring. "*Quand on commence à douter la religion,*" Chateaubriand acutely points out, "*on doute en politique. L'homme qui cherche les fondements de son culte ne tarde pas à s'enquérir des principes de son gouvernement. Quand l'esprit demande à être libre, le corps aussi veut l'être. Cela est une conséquence toute naturelle.*" Free religious and free political life are ultimately inseparable. There is not a real break in the line of political thought from the three pamphlets written by Luther in 1520 to the Declaration of Independence of 1776. As they proclaimed the religious liberty of the German of the sixteenth century, so the other proclaimed the political liberty of the American of the eighteenth. The line of succession runs from Martin Luther to John Calvin, from John Calvin to Philippe de Duplessis-Mornay, from Philippe de Duplessis-Mornay to John Knox, from John Knox to John Milton, from John Milton to John Locke, and from John Locke to Alexander Hamilton.

## CHAPTER V

## PROGRESS AND REVOLUTION

(1) *Reformation and Revolution*

ONE of the tragedies of the Reformation is that it turned to revolution. As the Renaissance was in part the cause of the Reformation, one might naturally expect to hear of the ushering in of the age of reason. Surely the way to convince a man was to argue with him and to persuade him of the truth of your side. Alack! down to the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 and later, the sword and the stake are the arguments employed. In Germany we encounter the Thirty Years War, in France the wars of religion, and in England the scaffold for the orthodox and the unorthodox alike. Perhaps in no other fashion could the vast change have taken place. The Church ruled by right divine, and the only method of destroying any divine right is force. Goethe wished that the Reformation had been led by an Erasmus rather than by a Luther. His wish was a vain one. While nature does not normally take a leap, she has her earthquakes as well as her still slow processes, her Etnas as well as her Jungfraus. In times when vast forces are called into being, the eruption of a volcano may accomplish in a week what the silent processes of nature may not accomplish in an age.

Men of the sixteenth century were sure that they possessed all the truth. Therefore they persecuted all who differed from them, for the persecuted were certainly in the wrong. One idea would cut at the roots of persecution, and that is that truth is progressive. The classical conception was that complete truth had been discovered in the past, and that the utmost we could hope was to attain in some scanty measure to this past ideal. The sixteenth century conception was not unlike, though the idea was gradually stealing over the minds of men that truth was far vaster than any individual could possibly grasp. Not only was truth vast, but there is the startling conception that there is growth in knowledge. If there is such a growth, clearly persecution is out of the question.

The civic ideal of the classical world, the monastic ideal of the early Middle Ages, the chivalrous ideal of the later Middle Ages—these are written so plainly on the pages of history that no one can ignore them. Each in turn passes away, and we seek the causes of their passing. The inquirer to-day perceives the altered ideal, and he naturally desires to note the trend of events when an ideal is translated into action. In a word, he assumes there must be a progress, an individual creating it. The idea of progress, however, is wholly modern, and was inconceivable before the sixteenth century. Even to-day it is a conception repellent to the Eastern mind, which holds that the thing that hath been is that which shall be, and there is no new thing under the sun.



We owe to Seneca (c. 2-65) the first clear statement of a theory of progress free from the ideas of the Golden Age in the past. There are some significant passages in his *Natural Questions*: "And there are many nations at the present hour who merely know the face of the sky and do not yet understand why the moon is obscured in an eclipse. It is but recently indeed that science brought home to ourselves certain knowledge on the subject. . . . The day will yet come when posterity will be amazed that we remain ignorant of things that will seem to them so plain." We are here far from the notion that the whole body of truth has already been discovered.

It has been the infinite loss of mankind that the following passage has not sunk deeply into the mind of Europe, though indeed it seems hardly to be understood by its author, for its implications contradict the Stoic creed. "Many discoveries are reserved for the ages still to be, when our memory shall have perished. The world is a poor affair if it do not contain matter for investigation for the whole world in every age. . . . Nature does not reveal all her secrets at once. . . . They are withdrawn and shut up in the inner shrine. Of one of them this age will catch a glimpse, of another the age that will come after."

The doctrine of Seneca was startling enough, but it created no impression on his time. After all, sound requires atmosphere, and there was no atmosphere for this sound at Rome. When the Renaissance scholars took down the folios containing the classical authors, it is intelligible that in their blind admiration the *Natural Questions* of Seneca should have escaped them. They read his moral platitudes, not his seminal scientific writings. Men used to read the writings of Thomas Aquinas or Albert the Great; the new fashion was to read those of Cicero or Plato; and the spirit in which they were read is the spirit in which the scholastic folios had been perused. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*. The book is different: the reader is the same. Feeling is in no wise human: it is only literary. Between life and the representation of life stands the artificial figure of antiquity. When the classics were so read, they were among the most deadly enemies of progress, producing the death, not the rebirth, of thought.

The great service Copernicus (1473-1543) rendered to mankind was the conception of the perpetual motion of this world. Motion there is in the worlds above, and incessant motion is in the worlds beneath. Petrarch (1304-74) is sometimes called the first modern man, and on the literary side a case may be made out for him. He was, however, as blind as Dante (1265-1321) to the forces around him which shaped political and scientific progress. What was fatal to the poem of Dante was the work of Copernicus. We discern no longer any distinction between the heavens and the earth. True, the earth became a heavenly body, but for all time to come the substance of the heavenly body was precisely the same as that of the earthly. It was no longer possible to entertain the belief that the stars influenced the destiny of man, for their motions obeyed the same laws as that of the globe we inhabit. Four generations after Copernicus, Blaise Pascal could state, "*Le silence éternel de ces espaces*

*m'effraie.*" The first modern man was neither St. Augustine nor Petrarch. He was the astronomer, the first to allow the scientific conception of Descartes. Man is dynamic. As Mr. Justice Holmes finely remarked, "But certainty generally is illusion, and repose is not the destiny of man."

## (2) *The Place of Descartes*

As we turn over the writings of the sixteenth century we catch a glimpse of the true spirit of the Renaissance. Do we remember sufficiently how long it was before the belief in progress was destined to prevail? If, on the one side, Rabelais, Campanella, and Francis Bacon are believers in progress, on the other Machiavelli, Bodin, and Montaigne are disbelievers. It is scarcely three centuries since the idea of the possibility of indefinite progress through man's own conscious efforts first emerged in the minds of a few thoughtful persons. It is to Bacon that the glory is due of first popularising this seminal idea, one of the greatest single ideas in the whole history of mankind in the vista of possibilities it opens before us.

It was hardly possible to conceive the idea of progress before the sixteenth century. For the doctrine of continuous change has for its basis the notion of the unity of mankind; it envisages the tribes, the cities, the nations as so many members of a great family. It assigns to each of them a providential rôle in the immeasurable career in which humanity advances. Now not only were these underlying truths dimly grasped by the classical worlds, but the members thereof were profoundly antipathetic to them. The discovery of printing, the impossibility of another *Völkerwanderung*, the greater ease of international relations, all combine to reject a system by which Machiavelli condemns the human race to eternal oscillations between truth and error. Indirectly books like Luther's *On the Freedom of a Christian Man* contributed much.

These ideas were fundamental conditions of the thought of Descartes (1596-1650). The Platonic conception of Bacon's New Atlantis was abhorrent to him. He broke completely with the past. It was a matter of pride to him that he had forgotten the Greek he had learned as a lad. Knowledge of philosophy and science furnished him with the key to the elevation of mankind. The first title he was eager to give his *Discourse on Method* was "The Project of a Universal Science which can elevate our Nature to the highest degree of Perfection." Reason was the test to which Descartes submitted everything; and from the use of reason he deduced laws of Nature which were invariable in their operation.

If we read our literature from 1580 to 1650, we are constantly struck by the circumstance that chance seems to rule all matters. The charms that ward off disease, the stars of birth that govern the lives of men, the comet that foretold the war with Germany—these were the subjects of ordinary conversation. The fields near town and village were at dusk the haunt of goblins and will-o'-the-wisps; the woods in the evening were full of fairies; and ghosts could be heard and seen in the village

churchyard. The influence of Descartes proved a powerful solvent of all such ideas. Dreams and omens, signs and wonders, are beginning to be replaced by the workings of all-potent laws of Nature. The implications of the Copernican system stand out in the mind of the thoughtful. Man is no longer the lord of creation; he is only an insignificant unit on one tiny planet surrounded by innumerable others.

The seventeenth century dispute on the merits of the ancients and the moderns raised the whole question of progress, for, if the ancients were profoundly superior to the moderns, the belief in progress falls to the ground. The quarrel lasted over a hundred years, and during its course public attention fastened itself on the matter at issue, which was nothing less than the question of the degeneracy of Nature. The point was, Can the men of the seventeenth century equal the men of the classical age? This point implied another, Did the succession of greatness stop with the antique world? Has it never been resumed?

These questions go to the very heart of the matter, for an imperative condition of the continuance of progress is a succession of men of genius. The many abhor new ideas, which, when valuable, always come from the few who initiate all movement. As one walks down a street in Florence one notes the statues to the famous Florentines of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries—Michael Angelo, Boccaccio, Dante, Ghiberti, Giotto, Machiavelli, and Petrarch. There was a larger number of great men then in a city with no more than seventy thousand inhabitants than in London to-day with its ten millions. It is clear that intellectual power has not continuously improved in Italy or in England. It is usual to say that times of ferment produce great thinkers and writers, and the age of Elizabeth is invariably adduced as a case in point. But why did we produce no poet of quite the first rank between Chaucer and Shakespeare or in the century and a half between Milton and Wordsworth? Have we in our generation of storm and stress a Shakespeare, a Pascal, a Goethe to-day? True, we have not, but, on the other hand, in our own day we possessed simultaneously a Darwin and a Kelvin, a Poincaré and a Helmholtz. Moreover, the efforts of men of genius in the past were largely confined to their own land. The discovery effected in a laboratory at Cambridge or Harvard to-day is known throughout the world to-morrow. Pasteur conferred no exclusive benefit on France because his ideas at once became common property. This internationalisation of knowledge is a mighty impetus to progress.

### (3) *Types of Progress*

Bury spends his strength on his characterisation of the two distinct types of the theories of progress. The one type is ready with a plan of "the city of gold" with all its streets and towers marked out, presupposing the authority of the State with the individual as little more than a cog in a well oiled wheel. The other type is unready with any plan, for its development is indefinite, its term unknown, and in it the

individual stands out with all the prominence he can desire. Fundamentally he is the initiator, the discoverer, not the State. Though Fourier, Saint Simon, and Comte attempted to ascertain the causes of the law of progress, they signally failed. Fourier and Saint Simon dreamt of industrial Socialism. It is an impressive dream of the importance of Labour in the world. The two types of theories of progress still remain, and we are all familiar with them, notably with the first type which at the moment is gaining ground in Europe. We need not emphasise the fact that Darwinism increases the value of the second type.

Evolution discredits all attempts to assign to the future a fixed form. Is not progress confined by the limitations of the human faculty? Is the boundary to which this faculty extends capable of indefinite approach? Laue at Munich, De Broglie in Paris, and Bragg in England have passed X-rays through crystals and produced effects by reflexion from planes of molecules in the crystals which very nearly reveal to us the individual molecule in its fixed position in the crystal. The X-rays appear to be of exceedingly small wavelength—perhaps 18,600 times less than that of light—and we have already a further instrument which shows that no finality in this direction need be expected. We at last split the atom itself. That it has a material existence seems as probable as anything we know.

The limits, then, of research are very hard to define. When we travel (apparently) to the bottom of material structure, synthesis may begin, and we may build up from atoms structures that have natural properties and repeat natural things. Is it hopeless to look forward to the construction of the very complex molecule of protoplasm? and, if it can be done, will it live? In truth, there is no limit to research save that imposed by our senses. Our material senses must be affected in some way by the matter that is the subject of the research. What our eye is unfitted to see may perhaps convey some sensation to smell or hearing, or may be so enlarged by our artifice that its image (which is, in the last resort, all that we ever see) shall become appreciable.

These are no idle speculations, for such a keen observer as Lord Balfour discerns progress in the modern alliance between pure science and industry. It would seem that the Labour Party regard nationalisation as a great step in progress. Socialism provides the ideal solution. The pity is that the paper schemes, which inaugurate the age of bliss, have never been adjusted to the actualities of the world as it exists. The vision of the Golden Age lay in the past for the men of antiquity and, for the most part, for the men of the Renaissance. It began to lie in the future for Descartes and the men he moulded. Science, which has altered so much, has also altered the value of the dogma of progress. Evolution will not hear of finality. What the conception of evolution has accomplished for our day the belief in progress accomplished for the eighteenth century. Once too you care for progress you care for the individual who renders it possible, and this care is not the least of the ingredients in the intellectual atmosphere of the men who might have

inaugurated a quiet revolution before 1789. They were obliged to see that the dream they dreamt never turned into reality. They might have brought about a preserving revolution, not the destroying revolution which France was destined to witness.

#### (4) *The Thirteen Colonies*

Descartes powerfully stamped the conception of progress on the mind of mankind. His attitude began to permeate the intellectual air, and men, all unconsciously, realised its influence. A century later the men of the Thirteen Colonies were feeling it, and were feeling it all the more because of the new environment in which they were placed. Tradition clung closely to the emigrants, and yet at the same time the fresh background coloured their angle of approach. Whittier claims, "We, too, are heirs of Runnymede." There is an association for the celebration of Magna Carta in America, and it is certainly more active in America than a similar society in England. The colonists were also the heirs of Descartes and what he stood for in the realm of thought. He was legal as well as philosophic in his outlook, and legalism is at home in England and it is no less at home in America.

We watch three stages in the drama of American Independence. The first is the war between Cavalier and Roundhead beginning in 1642, the second the Revolution of 1688, and the third the Declaration of Independence of 1776. At bottom they all turn upon the decisive question of the legal position of the individual. The first stage did not turn imperial till Oliver Cromwell controlled affairs. The second stage, through the Declaration of Rights, secured the powers of Englishmen at home: it failed to secure them in the colonies. The truth is that the English constitution of 1688 had grown, had developed, in many ways since the Revolution. The new place of the Prime Minister, the absence of the sovereign from the Cabinet—these were signs of the times which the colonists in their distant home did not fully observe. They forgot that the position of George III was wholly exceptional, and was due to his assertion of the kingly position against its supersession by the Whig oligarchy of nobles since 1688. Naturally they misread the situation, seeing in the division of powers into legislative, executive, and administrative their bulwark against tyranny, whereas the distinguishing mark of the English constitution was the union of these powers.

The Parliament of the eighteenth century claimed sovereignty over all and imposed taxation on all, abroad or at home. The Parliament of the seventeenth century allowed royal charters, and imposed taxation by estates: the clergy, for instance, were separately taxed down to the Restoration. Naturally the colonists adhered to seventeenth century ideas. Imbued with the spirit of Blackstone even more than with the spirit of Descartes, legality was the essence of their claim, and included not only what Parliament had done, but what the law of nature and the law of God had also done. The sway of Roman legal ideas seems every

now and then to disappear, but it is only for a time. It is sure to reappear, and it reappeared in the days before the Declaration of Independence. Silver-tongued Murray, Lord Mansfield (1705-93), held with Bodin and Hobbes that sovereignty was one ultimate and undivided authority, and for him the sovereignty of Parliament and the dependency of the dominions stood or fell together. It was a view akin to the Roman attitude. Against the plea of lawyers like him, the colonists set their seventeenth century charters, insisting on their royal—not their parliamentary—character. Against the view that a united Parliament imposed taxation, they set the medieval notion that taxation came by free grant of the several estates, of which they were one. Against the law of the land, they set the law of nature, that unfailing resource of all who deem themselves oppressed. "You have rights," proclaimed John Adams, "antecedent to all earthly government; rights that cannot be repealed or restrained by human laws; rights derived from the great legislator of the universe." "There can," according to James Otis, "be no prescription old enough to supersede the law of nature and the grant of the Almighty."

#### (5) *The Colonial Compact*

The conflict of authorities always allows the emergence of individualism: what is fatal to it is the union of authorities. From this angle of approach let us survey the conflict of royal and parliamentary authority during the seventeenth century. From the king came colonial charters, exempting the colonists from the jurisdiction of Parliament. By the middle of the eighteenth century every British colony, except Maryland, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, held charters from the crown, and even the proprietary colonies of Maryland and Pennsylvania maintained the royal connection. That is, all save four came directly under the control of the king. True, Parliament manifested some opposition, with the outcome that there was no common and centralised system of administration. The spirit of individualism was rampant. Still, all the colonies save four owned a governor, a council, patent and provincial officials, who looked to the king as the legal source of all their authority. Isolation, environment, and religious differences, combined with racial differences, rendered it difficult for the colonies to pursue any course of joint action, and indeed the only bond between them lay in their legal subordination to the Crown. Wars with the Indians and the French stimulated them occasionally to take co-operative measures, yet even this co-operation ran contrary to their individualism, and happened only when the British Government took the initiative. They regarded each other as "foreigners" in the medieval sense of the word, that is, men of other communities, and they often used this term to designate their neighbours. They were so locally minded that they refused to sacrifice any of their own power for the sake of a federation, protecting them from external dangers. The authority of the King in

Privy Council or in the Board of Trade was distant and certainly evadable: the authority of the other colonies was present and non-evadable.

The ancestors of the colonists of 1776 took the view that they had contracted out of Parliament when they had "compact" with the sovereign. The trouble was that in the eighteenth century the colonists assumed the right to decide whether the other party to the compact had or had not broken it, and in the days to come Abraham Lincoln was to deny that one party to a contract could decide whether the other had broken it.

English traditions and English blood did not flow in the colonists for nothing. What John Hampden felt when asked to contribute to ship-money, the colonists felt in 1765. The Virginia resolutions on the Stamp Act invoked "the distinguishing characteristic of British freedom, without which the ancient constitution cannot exist." The authors of the Massachusetts Circular Letter of 1768 reply, to the contrary contention of Lord Camden, that it is an "unalterable right, in nature, engrafted into the British constitution, as a fundamental law," that taxation and representation go hand in hand. "We declare," said the first Continental Congress in 1774, "as Englishmen our ancestors in like case have usually done," that "the inhabitants of the English colonies by the immutable laws of nature, the principles of the English constitution, and the several charters, have the following rights," which breathe the very spirit of individualism. That the attachment of this Congress was to the Crown, not to Parliament, is clear in its statement that "we wish not a diminution of the prerogative."

### (6) *The Individualistic Colonies*

Men like Lord North and George III might plead the sovereignty of Parliament as much as they pleased. The colonists pleaded the charters of the English kings, the writings of English philosophers such as John Locke, their rights as individual Englishmen, and the liberties granted by the Roman conception of the law of nature. They took the seventeenth century interpretation of Magna Carta as a boon conferring freedom on the individual. They assumed that migration from the Mother Country had in no wise altered their status as Englishmen. How could migration effect such an alteration? The Declaration of Independence continued to advance this outlook, and in effect it charged against the Parliament of George III what the men of 1688 charged against James II.

The individualism of outlook was not confined to the unit: it extended to the mass. Just as the English Estates in the Middle Ages deemed defence against Scotland a matter for the border counties or the security of the Straits the concern of the Cinque Ports, so the Carolinas cared as little for the perils of Massachusetts as New England for those of Virginia. We note, for instance, a congress at Albany in 1754, yet it was unable to bring the individualistic colonies to common action because its members

and South from 1861 to 1865 was to attest. Nominally it was fought on the question of slavery: really it was fought on the right of any particular State to secede. It is the spirit of individualism from another approach. Take the view of Calhoun on behalf of South Carolina. He clearly laid down that "the people of these United States . . . are now or ever have been . . . formed into one nation or people is not only without foundation in truth, but contrary to the most certain and plain historical facts and the clearest deductions of reason." Such a frame of mind, he believed, conduces to "a consolidated government without constitutional check or limitation," and "must necessarily terminate in the loss of liberty itself." In truth, the war was but another phase of the protean struggle of individualism to assert itself. There is yet another phase of it upon which Professor E. J. Turner lays stress. "Complex society" is, in his view, "precipitated by the wilderness into a kind of primitive organisation based on the family. . . . The frontier individualism has from the beginning promoted democracy."

The individualism of the Fathers of the American Constitution by no means implied a belief in democracy. "Mankind," confessed George Washington, "when left to themselves are unfit for their own government." The millennium, in fact, was not ushered in when the Peace of Paris was signed in 1783. Alexander Hamilton perceived this every whit as much as Washington, and Hamilton stands out as a great constitutional statesman. Talleyrand, who felt for him as much affection as his cold heart would allow, declared, after knowing all the great men of his generation, that only Fox and Napoleon were Hamilton's equals, and that he had divined Europe, though he had never seen it. Morally he stands between the two greatest Americans—with a clearer intellect than Washington, though lacking something of Lincoln's divine passion for humanity. But to think of Hamilton is to see him, as it were, on a pedestal—a great and noble presence, exalted, high set above the clamour and confusion, the mean compromise and gross overwhelming success of the market-place. "The voice of the people," thought Hamilton, "has been said to be the voice of God; but, however generally this maxim has been quoted and believed, it is not true in fact. The people are turbulent and changeable; they seldom judge or determine right." "Your people," he declared at a New York dinner, "your people is a great *beast*."

On the eve of independence John Adams had written, "There must be decency and respect and veneration introduced for persons in authority, of every rank, or we are undone." What Adams derived from Harrington (1611-77), Harrington had derived from Plato, and that was his respect for a "government of laws and not of men." The legalist tradition of England once more emerges. Face to face with the task of constructing a new constitution Hamilton could recognise the merits of the one he had lost. "I believe," such was his avowal, "the British Government forms the best model the world ever produced, and such has been its progress in the minds of many that this truth gradually gains ground."



James Madison, twice President, shared the fears of Hamilton and Washington, of Adams and Gouverneur Morris. He asserted that "to secure private rights against majority factions" was one of his main objects, and his individualism is sufficiently evident. In conjunction with John Jay, Alexander Hamilton, and others, he wrote in 1787-88, *The Federalist*, which appeared in the shape of a series of letters recommending the proposed Constitution for adoption to the people of New York. Important as the Declaration of Independence is, from the point of view of the merits and the demerits of individualism, *The Federalist* is incomparably more important. In it Madison argued that it was necessary to base the political system on the actual conditions of "natural inequality." The date of the Declaration of Independence is 4th July, 1776, yet within twelve years men of the stature of Hamilton and Madison have moved away from its standpoint that "all men are created equal." A true disciple of Locke, Hamilton considered that those who possessed no property could not properly be regarded as having a will of their own. When discussing the subject of representation, Franklin stoutly maintained that "as to those who have no landed property . . . the allowing them to vote for legislators is an impropriety." Madison criticised the British parliamentary system on the ground of the undue lowness of the qualification for the franchise in cities and boroughs.

The unanimous view of the Fathers of the new Republic was that the only people who really counted were the land-holding class. All the states of the Republic were agreed in demanding evidence that the voter either had a freehold of a certain value or other estate, or that he paid some public tax. The Boston town meeting represented no more than three or four per cent. of its population. The colonial franchise of Massachusetts was restricted to between one-fourth and one-fifth of the adult male population, being narrower than it had been under colonial government.

If the qualification of the voter stood high, the qualification of the office-holder stood much higher. The governor must be a freeholder. The value of the freehold was fixed in Massachusetts at £1,000, in Maryland at £5,000, and in South Carolina at £10,000. As Locke had demanded, there were religious tests in all the states save New York and Rhode Island, and this in spite of the presence of such men as Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Thomas Paine. Some states asked that the governor should be a Protestant, others that he should be a Christian. We see individualism, but it is obviously the individualism of the elect. Men like Madison and Dickenson grounded this difference between the elect and the non-elect on the distinction between the sovereign "people" and "those multitudes without property and without principle." In a word, the principle was strictly limited individualism, but once you allow limited individualism, it may become limitless. The Fathers of the Republic builded better than they knew, for they builded quite other than they knew.

(8) "*The Federalist*"

No less than twenty-three attempts at union on the part of the colonists had failed before 1776, and after the signing of the peace of 1783 it seemed this failure was to continue. Each State contended for its own rights, and in order to demonstrate the existence of these State rights they raised tariff walls around their boundaries. Pennsylvania attacked Delaware. New York and Rhode Island, in spite of their refusal to entertain religious tests, proceeded to oppress Connecticut. New Jersey, lying between New York on the one hand and Pennsylvania on the other, was compared to "a cask tapped at both ends"; North Carolina, between South Carolina and Virginia, to "a patient bleeding at both stumps." In Massachusetts there was open civil war. As the British Government had besought the colonists to compass a federation, so now Washington and Hamilton besought them. As the British Government had fruitlessly implored them to levy contributions, so now in turn Washington and Hamilton fruitlessly implored them.

The Declaration of Independence maintained that "governments derived their just powers from the consent of the governed." The Fathers of the Republic, influenced on the one hand by Locke and on the other by Montesquieu, maintained that the less power the government possessed the better, and that such powers as were given should be balanced and played off against one another, and should be held for short periods only. The fruits of long colonial experience were felt in the trust of the legislative combined with distrust of the executive.

While the doctrine of contract possesses a long pedigree, going back at least to the days of Plato, the colonists were more familiar with it in their return to seventeenth-century conception of parliamentary power which certainly allowed the Crown to bestow charters on the colonists, thereby taking them, as they thought, out of the sphere of parliament, for they had entered into a contract with the Crown. With the European branch of this pedigree the Fathers were not very familiar: with the English branch they were quite familiar. Milton's *Areopagitica* (1644), his *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649), his *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano* (1651), his *Defensio Secunda* (1654), Harrington's *Oceana* (1656), Sidney's *Discourses Concerning Government* (1698), and Locke's *Two Treatises on Government* (1690) were all books to be found in their hands and the contents in their heads. These books alike insisted on the importance of the contract conception and the share of the citizen in agreeing to it. The Revolution principles, according to John Adams, are "the principles of Aristotle and Plato; of Livy and Cicero, and Sidney, Harrington, and Locke; the principles of nature and eternal reason; the principle on which the whole government over us stands." The sway of Calvinism is plain in James Otis's resounding statement that "there can be no prescription old enough to supersede the law of nature, and the grant of God Almighty; who has given to all men a natural right to be *free*. . . . The law of nature was not of man's making, nor is it in his power to mend it, or alter its course."

The world of the Europe of 1788 was a world of monarchs with only one free nation and with none democratic. If the task was great, men like Hamilton were fully equal to it. The antinomy between democracy and liberty, the State and the individual, vexed his soul, as it still vexes the souls of men. Let anyone turn to *The Federalists* and let him turn to the contemporary constitution-makers of France. The contrast is markedly in favour of the men of the Convention of Philadelphia. Hamilton realises what few of the nineteenth-century imitators of the English constitution realised—that a constitution was a mere skeleton till true tradition breathed the spirit of life into it. Hamilton was determined that the break with the past should be as little as he could make it, and he anticipated Whitman in this respect. There is accordingly continuity in noble American life, and not the least of the glories of Alexander Hamilton is that he is the man who insisted on the worth of the spirit in which Federalism moves and has its being.

The Convention of Philadelphia, which met on 14th May, 1787, set up a democratic constitution in an age when such a constitution was wholly unknown. In 1787 George III had been twenty-seven years on the throne, and he had spent the whole of them in the endeavour to realise the ideal of Bolingbroke's *Patriot King*, which meant in effect that he aimed at autocracy. Yet his was the freest, in fact the only free, country in Europe. The States General of France had not met since 1614, and the memory of popular control had died away. In 1766 Louis XV issued an edict declaring that he held his crown from God alone, and that he was the sole fountain of legislative power. Sixteen years before the Convention of Philadelphia he had abolished the local *parlements*. The fate of the States General had been the fate of the Cortes of Spain, of the republics of Central Italy, and of the greater part of the free institutions of the towns of Flanders, Germany, and those along the Rhine and the Baltic. The Revolution of 1772 greatly aggrandised the royal authority in Sweden. In Holland the House of Orange gained a quasi-royal position at the expense of the corrupt States General. For generations Poland had been struggling with anarchy, and in 1772 she suffered her first partition. France crushed the freedom of Corsica. An oligarchy as corrupt as the Dutch States General governed Genoa, while Venice, nominally republican, was really so devoid of authority as to be ready to fall to the first invader. With the possible exception of Geneva, in Switzerland we find that Berne, Fribourg, Lucerne, Soleure and Zurich were all under the narrowest oligarchy. Into such a world was the federal constitution of the United States born. The actions and interactions of such a constitution on Europe are outstanding. If there had been no War of Independence, would there have been a revolution in France? A collapse of the Bourbon dynasty was assured, but was much else assured? The men of 1776 demonstrated in a world of kingdoms republicanism to be a fact, not an emotion. From them the French might have learned the true theory of liberty, but as Lord Acton remarks, the French took from them "a theory of revolution, not a theory of government." The America

which was known and admired in France was the land of Otis and Jefferson, of a grand defiance and a successful war, not the America of constructive effort, of the Philadelphia Convention and the *Federalist*.

### (9) *Rousseau the Portent*

We do not mean to discuss the causes of the French Revolution. It is a mistake, perhaps, to learn history from text-books. For our own part we would recommend a little shelf which should contain, just below Voltaire's moral tales and Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*, the *Manon Lescaut* of Prévost (1783), Marivaux's *Paysan Parvenu* (1735), *Clarissa Harlowe* in the French version by the Abbé Prévost (about 1750), Diderot's *Religieuse* (published so late as 1796, but widely circulated in manuscript thirty years before), Goethe's *Werther*, which took France by storm in the French translation about 1778, Laclos's *Liaisons Dangereuses* (1782), Beaumarchais's *Mariage de Figaro* (1784), and the *Paul et Virginie* of Bernardin Saint-Pierre (1788). We could not conscientiously recommend this course of reading to the family circle; but at the end an attentive reader would understand, quite as well as the professional historian, why the French Revolution was, after all, inevitable. Not even the Roman satirists ever launched against the society of their time a more furious indictment than that which Laclos, Diderot, and Beaumarchais declaim with such sinister and incisive brilliance. They denounce the heartlessness, the vanity, the licence, and the corruption of their age in terms of a measured elegance which itself is artificial; but, no less than Richardson, or Goethe, or Saint-Pierre, they are apostles of simplicity, and preach, as a panacea, the return to nature.

When the world-spirit desires to fertilise the ideas of a people there is no great difference in the proceeding from nature's ordinary plan, which is always the introduction of a germ from without. Just as the wind and insects let fall a breeding dust into the heart of a flower, so a foreign way of feeling, the mind of another race, may serve as a sort of pollen to fructify our human societies. And this is nearly always the process of renewal. When a nation has brought to perfection a form of art or literature, the result is a period of dullness and ennui. Perfection organised soon degenerates into a stereotyped mediocrity, and the poems of an Ausonius or paintings of a Raphael reveal to us the result of a classic made to order. An art or a literature in this stage of inanity (amusing only to an academy of adepts) may endure for ages. Witness China. But, as a rule, accident or nature sends it some fertilising vagabond, ignorant of the tradition he disturbs. And the result is a fresh efflorescence. In France towards the middle of the eighteenth century the flower was visited by more than one wandering visitant, for the English science of Newton and his disciples was one cause of the new crop of ideas and images in French philosophy and letters. But, despite his greatness, Newton was the lesser factor.

The real regenerator, the man who stirred the depths and brought new things into being, was just a man from the Alps—a rolling stone

who had gathered no moss—a sort of travelling secretary, who might have sung (since he liked singing) the air of *Vengo di Cosmopolis*. He imported, with the jealous individualism of Geneva, an almost German sense of simplicity and tender homeliness, and the Italian's worship of the beautiful. This little Swiss was, of course, Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-78).

Like La Fontaine, like Cowper, Rousseau was forty years of age before he sought success as an author; up to that time he had wandered and enjoyed, brooded, dreamed, and, without consciously observing, had let a good many truths sink into his mind unawares. Neither at Geneva, his native place, nor in Savoy, nor in Venice or Turin, had he appeared remarkable for anything save a sort of timid graciousness. He had little conversation, and stammered sometimes in trying to say too many things at once. As he did not write, it was difficult to gauge the intensity and complexity of his feelings. The disorder of his speech (that *embarras* to which he frequently referred) and a certain general incoherence was due, in fact, to the extraordinary vivacity and mobility of his sensations, as also to a lack of mental and moral co-ordination. Often indeed the exquisite impressionability of a nature appears at first sight as a sort of stupidity. Say to an ordinary man, "What colour are these swans?" he will answer, "White." Ask the same question of an artist distinguished by a supersensitive vision, aware of a whole series of whites and greys in an infinite range of nuances—he will stammer and hesitate. The little Swiss secretary was always stammering and hesitating. He appeared in fact to others much as he described himself: "*Un homme sans malice plutôt que bon, une âme saine mais faible*," or, as David Hume described him, an ugly pretty little fellow with an expressive face.

Most of us derive our opinion of Rousseau from his *Confessions*, and that opinion is seldom favourable. The book is indubitably a work of genius; but it is also the self-revelation of a disgusting personality. It was Sir Leslie Stephen who remarked that, whatever might be our difference of opinion about the author of the *Confessions*, we must all agree that no gentleman could have written it. Another critic has been inspired by them to express himself more strongly and sum up the author as "a sentimental cad." He was that, and he was worse than that. He unctuously excused himself for making public reference to the amours of great ladies on the grounds that these were notorious; but he deliberately and without apology related in sickening detail the story of his amorous relations with Madame de Warens—a lady whose weaknesses were not a matter of public knowledge, and whose reputation he was bound by every honourable obligation to shield. He was not even satisfied to boast of the favours which she extended to him, but went on to state that he had to share those favours with another dependent in her household. The man who wrote like that, and who went about reading aloud what he had written in Parisian salons, had most assuredly the soul of a *valet de chambre*.

Rousseau, the renewer of individualism, was by right a fastidious and solitary spirit. He is the spiritual father of all who pursue the art of self-confession. Perhaps indeed his greatest achievement is that he inaugurated a new state of mind. We are too apt to forget that our feelings, no less than our sciences, are conquests and acquirements. Some great individual enlarges the hereditary domain, and thenceforward a novel region is within the reach of all. A great man no less than a great landscape is an *état d'âme*. Rousseau invented a new fashion in feeling like a discoverer who brings an ultra-violet ray within our vision. He projected upon life the rays of a mind which lit up hitherto invisible summits and abysses, and impressed upon the outer world the fresh form of an original understanding. He saw things, not as they appeared to his contemporaries, nor as they had appeared to his ancestors, but in accordance with some inner image, still fragmentary, slowly formed, of which he elaborated the conception, and then imprinted it on society. He furnished a new sentimental medium, he discovered a new ideal. And that is his principal title to fame. He was not merely a man of letters, a novelist, a philosopher, a botanist, a musical composer, a social reformer, an apostle, and, if you will, a prophet; he brought into our ken a new sphere of sensibility. Rousseau was, emphatically, an initiator.

All around the small part of our activities, which so far we have cultivated and colonised, there stretches a wide field of resources which most men never bring into any use at all. Or, to vary our metaphor, most of us are in the position of persons possessing in the bank several deposit accounts to only one of which they have obtained a cheque book. And the excitement of some new idea, the enthusiasm created by some great individual, suddenly puts us in possession of new resources, admits us to our own, gives us access in fact to our hidden treasure. A new ideal is a great dynamic agent, unlocking innumerable energies which might never have come into play. Rousseau gave us the cheque book to an account we possessed already, but did not utilise. For the human individual usually lives far within his limits, and fails to use a great part of the means at his disposal. With a few simple words (such as Nature, Virtue, Equality), with a few very simple ideas, partly false (such as "Nature is good," "Be just and you will be happy," "The root of all evil is inequality"), and thanks to the intense conviction with which he animated these words and ideas—making them radiant, illuminating, prophetic—Rousseau produced a contagious optimism which brought forth great results, for good and evil.

#### (10) *The Problem of Rousseau's Character*

Such characters as Rousseau (or Coleridge) raise in our minds an eternal question: What is the relative importance of virtue? Perhaps their many faults consist in one comprehensive defect, a want of will, an absence of duty, or, if you will plunge deeply, religion. As far as behaviour goes, Rousseau in his earlier years appears to have been a

mere mass of jelly; and when he attained a decent ideal of conduct his intelligence succumbed. So long as he was a man of genius he appeared unable to recognise an obligation, he lived at the expense of his mistress and employer, he sent his children to the Foundling Hospital, accepted from all his friends favours, loans, sacrifices, with nothing more deterrent than an agony of shame. He made efforts indeed, but they never came to anything—at least, they never seemed to come to anything approaching virtue. They amounted to a vast total of genius, of philosophy, of noble conceptions, and daring speculation—and at last they appeared to affect the soul. Rousseau in his latest years was *une belle âme*. But then the intelligence succumbed, and he was more or less a madman.

Meditation over the astonishing career of Rousseau suggests the question, Were his deficiencies organic? Were they part of the experience requisite to the development of his genius? He himself in his *Lettre à M. de Beaumont* supplies us with an answer: "*Honorez en général tous les fondateurs de cultes. . . . Ils ont eu de grand génies et de grandes vertus ; cela est toujours estimable. Ils se sont dit les envoyés de Dieu ; cela peut être et n'être pas. . . . Mais quand cela ne serait pas, il ne faut pas les traiter si légèrement d'imposteurs. Qui sait jusqu'où les méditations continuelles sur la divinité, jusqu'où l'enthousiasme de la vertu ont pu, dans leurs sublimes âmes, troubler l'ordre didactique et frappant des idées vulgaires. Dans une trop grande élévation la tête tourne, et l'on ne voit plus choses comme elles sont.*" It is probable that if he had never known what it is to "trouble the low and didactic order of popular ideas," his genius might not have filled its measure. For his genius is composed of what was lacking in his life—like a cast whose hollows produce a substantial model. The man who (as he assures us) never knew the fullness of love and equal marriage, the man who lived with a dissolute mistress a dozen years older than himself, or else with an ignorant servant maid, invented the heroic passion of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, and the noble married friendship of Julie and her husband; the father who exposed his babies, brooding on that crime, brought up the son he never knew with all the novel excellence described in *Emile*; the lackey, the secretary, accustomed to dine below the salt, evolved in a perfect passion for equality the terms of a new social contract which should exterminate a privileged aristocracy and announce the sovereignty of the nation; the exile, condemned to dwell on the monotonous plains of Chenonceaux or in the streets of Paris, remembered his Alps with such a pang that he caused a new vision of nature to enchant the eyes of all the world; in his miserable lodging and his cumbrous Armenian gown, the starveling copyist discovered the value of fresh air, exercise, cold water, and, for the new born, of mother's milk, till he set loose from his garret the startling conception of hygiene. Having constantly suffered from the fellowship of men, he avows: "*une aversion naturelle pour l'ordre apparent de la société,*" a desire "*remplacer les choses dans leur ordre naturel,*" and a constant indignation "*contre nos sottes institutions civiles, où le vrai bien public et la véritable justice sont toujours sacrifiés à je ne sais quel ordre apparent, destructif en effet de tout ordre, et qui ne fait qu'ajouter la sanction de l'autorité publique à l'oppression du faible et à l'iniquité du fort.*"

(II) *The Romantic School*

Rousseau has been in turns adored and detested; he has never been neglected. Nor has he at any time ceased to count—though many of his conceptions are obsolete, much of his intellectual power useless. What is it that makes his power? In spite of Lemaître, his immortality is not mainly due to his style. This might be true if it were a spoken style—the great oratory which appeals to the many. But written style touches the few—a limited number of people who have literary susceptibilities. A larger audience demands something that has relation to themselves; something that touches daily life and conduct. Rousseau gave the world this. We are, nevertheless, no nearer the secret of his strength, and the only fashion in which we can attempt to reach it is to begin with what it is not. It is not chiefly his political significance or his actual contribution to thought. Even if, as a rough generalisation, it is true that he made the French Revolution, it was the worst part of it that he made. But, though he was one of the many who worked, unknowing, at the loom where it was woven, it was not he who created it. The ideas that evoked it were in the air. Rousseau was but the voice of the age—a voice crying from the Hermitage—not far from Madame de Warens, and very far from the wilderness. What was it then, that gave him the hold on the world? It seems as if it were largely this—that the most personal and self-absorbed of men had in some ways had the most impersonal effect. He has lived on in the realm of ideals, perhaps in more varied forms (many of them opposed in seeming to his own), and among more different kinds of men, than almost any other modern genius. Some of his unconscious offspring, although they may not have read him, have been his worst foes, have slain their father Parmenides; but no educationalist, from Miss Edgeworth to Goethe, hardly an idealist or moral reformer, from Ruskin to Tolstoy, can call himself free from Rousseau. Above all—and it is his chief achievement—he formed the Romantic School. Chateaubriand, Victor Hugo, George Sand, Michelet also, would rejoice to acknowledge their debt to him. He brought men back to Nature for her own sake—to love her lyrically. He evoked a new race of poets. Wordsworth himself in the years of his fervour for the Revolution drank in the ideas of Rousseau and found that Frenchman's passion for the country drew out a deeper chord from his soul. Goethe and Schiller, in their earlier work, and Byron and Shelley are the spiritual children of Rousseau. He invented individualism in literature, that note of intimacy and often of morbid introspection, which makes the greatness and the smallness of modern art. Yet he was the sworn foe of individualism in politics. He was the initiator of something fresh—something of a strangely alloyed nature, both good and evil, but something which, whether good or evil, is ours now and indispensable.

The mixture is not wholly unexplained. Rousseau's position in time was perhaps unique. He is generally regarded as the prophet of a vital future, but he had in him as well all the dead roots of the past. No one



was more rotten or more fertile. Decadent, yet vigorous with the sap of youth, he lived in a frontier country, a land, therefore, of vexed issues; and none can clearly tell even now what was decay, what was promise, in him. The man who could blaze out in noble wrath at cruelty and preach the gospel of loving kindness at the same time as he deserted his own children; who could thunder against rank and its luxuries, yet live luxuriously at the expense of the great lords; who urged democracy and supported aristocracy; who wept over the charms of purity and proved them only by being an exception to its rule—was bound to bewilder himself and us. He is perhaps most bewildering in *Emile*. There was nothing so unnatural as a return to Nature, and Rousseau was the least natural of men. A return always implies a divorce, and a divorce from some highly strung reason—sensitiveness, satiety, discontent, aspiration, noble or other; all, more or less, the fruits of self-developed society. Every primitive Utopian, whether purely personal, like Shelley and Blake or Thoreau, or a dreamer of the world, or the maker of an eighteenth-century Arcadia, has founded his desire for solitude on some such disgust with reality, forgetting the while that Nature is the greatest reality of all. Rabelais alone, who turned to Nature from no quarrel with mankind, but because he wanted to fight asceticism—Rabelais alone saw whither natural instinct must lead men. He only had the courage to write "*Fais ce que voudras*" over his Abbey of Thelema. Rousseau, afraid of facing fact, preferred to write "Sensibility" over his portal, and plunged himself up to the head in a quagmire of untruth. Jesuit and Protestant, democrat and aristocrat, a votary of the arts and their denouncer, the defender of property in the *Encyclopædia*, and, at the same moment, its virulent foe in public speech, a strict moralist, a lax liver—the evidence against him is irrefutable. Yet his exhortations to virtue were no hypocrisy. He wished men to lead a good life; he would have liked to lead one himself, but he did not want the strain of trying. No one knew his weakness better than himself. "Floating between Nature and reason, I live in a perpetual contradiction and do nothing I wish to do," so he wrote to the great doctor, Tronchin. And again, in his *Rêveries d'un Promeneur*: "This comes from a versatile temperament which a turbulent wind always agitates, but which regains calm the instant that the wind ceases to blow. It is my ardent nature which perturbs me, and my indolent nature which pacifies me."

In his own time he could produce chaos, such a classic of confusion as *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, such topsy-turvy reforms as induced great ladies to have their babies brought to the opera that they might nurse them in their boxes. But what is his real world? It is emotional, not intellectual—a contribution to art, not thought. He initiated something greater than the Romantic Movement. He introduced into art the idea that motive is more than deed. The Quietists had already translated it into practice, and had done not a little harm by it. In the hands of Rousseau, the artist, it was equally dangerous. "I am a slave," he owns, "to my vices; in my remorse I am free." But though the con-

ception brings its perils, it is also one of the grandest, and it has done great things in literature; nor could we to-day do without it.

Rousseau possessed deep qualities, but they were not vital. He embalmed ideas in the magic spiceries of words. When he was discussing with Diderot the essay that made his fame, about the influence of the arts on the world's progress, he announced himself as their champion. But when Diderot urged him to take the opposite view, as more interesting, he consented, and wrote a burning indictment of art and science as the corrupters of humanity. Nor was he altogether insincere. Sooner or later, he was bound to turn into the foe of civilisation, and his false arguments probably first set him into imagining the evils it had wrought upon men, and helped him to formulate his message. The essay was a pure piece of journalism, and of journalism he was as great a genius as Jonathan Swift himself. It was this brilliant faculty which enabled Rousseau to furnish eloquent tags, such as became the trumpet calls of the Terror—such as made Robespierre and Saint-Just and Madame Roland quote him, and Marat read him aloud to an acclaiming audience.

The men who proved to be formative influences in the mental atmosphere of Rousseau were many and diverse. Plato and Montesquieu, Hobbes and Locke, Grotius and Pufendorf and Barbeyrac all furnished their contribution. Of these by far the greatest in his mental horizon were Plato at the beginning of his career and Montesquieu towards its close. Hobbes and Locke moved him much more by way of repulsion than by way of attraction, but they moved him. As these influences are diverse, it is but natural that Rousseau's nature should reflect their mental diversity. If on the one hand he proves the champion of the corporate life, on the other he proves the champion of individual liberty. If he is the heir of Plato, he is no less the heir of Locke. The Platonic element in his mixed mental thought gains steadily at the expense of the Lockean, with the outcome that he stands before us substantially as the champion of the utter sovereignty of the State. The devotion to country comes to outweigh any rights of the individual. From the glowing pages of Plutarch he came to feel a thrill as he contemplated the lives of Fabricius and Regulus, Agesilaus and Lycurgus. Hence, in a passage of his *Economie politique* he puts even Socrates below Cato. "For Athens was already lost, and Socrates had no country left but the wide world; while Cato never ceased to bear his country in the inmost chamber of his heart; he lived for nothing but his country, and could not bring himself to outlive her."

### (12) *The Inconsistencies of Rousseau*

The attraction Rousseau felt for Montesquieu (1689-1755) is apparent in many passages in his writings. Take a couple of them. "Before putting up a large building, the architect observes and tests the soil," according to Rousseau, "in order to see if it can bear the weight. In the same way, the wise law-giver begins not by drawing up the laws which

are the best in themselves, but by examining whether the nation is capable of bearing them." Take a second passage also from the *Contrat Social*: "Liberty is not a fruit which grows in all climates. It is therefore not within the reach of all nations. The more we reflect on this principle established by Montesquieu, the more its truth will be felt. The more it is disputed, the larger the opening for establishing it by fresh proofs." Nor are these isolated passages in the *Contrat Social*, which devotes a fifth part to a consideration of the points lying at the base of the *Esprit des Lois*. The parts taken by outward circumstance, inherited character, and historical tradition find their due place in the thought of Rousseau, and in the importance he attaches to them he is a true disciple of Montesquieu. At the same time we freely admit that had it not been for the demands made upon Rousseau by the patriots of Geneva, Corsica, and Poland, begging him to assist them in their task of devising a constitution for their respective countries, it is quite likely that the influence of Montesquieu would not have been so marked as it came to be. It is tempting to think of Rousseau as we do of Carlyle, as if there had been two Rousseau. There is the Carlyle we like: he writes before 1850. There is the Carlyle we dislike: he writes after that year. The Rousseau of the *Contrat Social* is not the man who wrote *Le Gouvernement de Pologne*. The second *Discours sur l'inégalité*, *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, *Emile*, and the *Contrat Social* were all written between 1753 and 1762. During these ten years the brain of their author was working at the highest possible pressure.

There is much in the first *Discours sur les Sciences*, published in 1755, to attract us. In it Rousseau affirms the supreme importance of the moral virtues, and denies their dependence on the intellect of man. The corruption of mankind, he points out, is due to "the fatal inequality which springs from the exaltation of talent and the disparagement of virtue." He denounces "the invention of the odious words mine and thine, the division of mankind into the cruel and brutal beings known as masters and the lying rascals whom we call slaves." The Academy of Dijon proposed the question, *Quelle est l'origine de l'inégalité parmi les hommes, et si elle est autorisée par la loi naturelle?* In his second *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*, Rousseau answers this question in a tone of the most fervent individualism, which reminds us of the opening remarks of the *Contrat Social*. In it he takes up the ideas of the first *Discours* and expands them. The state of nature in which men lived originally is neither so dark as that of Hobbes nor so bright as that of Locke. The one writer imports the vices, the other the virtues, of civilisation into a state which is its antipodes. The state of nature, if it existed at all, must rather have been a state of isolation; a state in which each man lived solely by himself and for himself.

In time man advances, though how he does so we do not quite know. We find the institution of the family which means mutual dependence and which also means the beginnings of property. "The first man who enclosed a plot of ground and bethought himself of saying 'This is mine,' and found others foolish enough to believe him, was the

true founder of civil society." A contract confirmed this advance due to the creation of law and the formation of the State. The contract, we note, is compatible with many forms of government. This second *Discours* and the *Economie Politique* regard property as the very foundation of society, a position which is the exact opposite of that maintained in the *Contrat Social*. The conclusion of the second *Discours sur l'inégalité* is amazing. We are astonished to read not merely that there are evils in all forms of government, but that those evils are inseparable from all these forms. We are asked to come to the attitude of a Mohammedan in what Rousseau apparently regards as the inscrutable decrees of destiny. In a spirit of unredeemed pessimism we are told to conclude that "the vices which make social institutions a necessity are the same vices which, at a later stage, make the abuse of them inevitable." As in his *Contrat Social*, in his *Discours sur l'inégalité* he dislodges the idea of natural law. From the days of Heraclitus in the sixth century B.C. men had lived under the domain of the law of nature. Hooker and Grotius, Hobbes and Locke had all given it a fresh lease of life. Spinoza (1632-77) was one of the few thinkers who escaped partly from its dominance. Its removal from the domain of political philosophy is one of the prominent features of the work of Rousseau.

In the ideas of Spinoza might and right were inextricably confused together. With Rousseau there is an impassable gulf fixed between them, and he concentrates his attention in his *Contrat Social* (1762) on a determined attempt to regard right alone as the true ideal. As he was so much under the dominance of Montesquieu, one would expect that our author should regard right as subject to the process of evolution. Man cannot shake off the past. Rousseau felt this, and in his two *Discourses* he adopts the attitude that the advance of man is not forward, but backward. Right is not subject to stages in its evolution. The golden age lies in the past; it does not stretch forward into the future. Right, then, belongs to the past when man lived in this golden time. The same idea appears in the opening words of the *Contrat Social*: "Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains."

The clauses of the Contract, in his judgment, "reduce themselves to a single one; that is, the total surrender (*aliénation totale*) of each associate with all his rights to the community at large. . . . If we then put aside all that is not of the essence of the Contract, we shall find that it reduces itself to the following terms. Each of us throws himself and all his powers into the common stock, under the supreme control of the general will, and, as a body, we receive each individual member as an inseparable part of the whole.

"At that very instant and in virtue of this act of association, the individual self of each contracting member is replaced by a moral and corporate body, composed of as many members as the Assembly contains votes. And from this same act this collective body receives its unity, its corporate self (*son moi commun*), its life and its will."

The sanction of this Contract is clearly nothing else but the united force of the community as a whole. "In order that the social compac

may not prove an empty formula, it includes the tacit understanding that, whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be compelled to obedience by the whole body of citizens. But this means nothing more than that they will force him to be free."

### (13) *The General Will*

Hobbes at first urges that the fear of war, consequent on the breaking of the pact, will induce men to keep it, though later he introduces by a side wind the idea of duty. Spinoza shares the first opinion of Hobbes, and refuses for a single moment to share the second. Locke feels that a sense of utility will bind men to obedience. On the other hand, Rousseau holds that sense of duty is paramount.

The Platonic conception of the State has come to life again. Only in and through the State can a man realise all his faculties; only through the State is the good life possible. Man used to live for himself: now he lives for the State. He used to possess an individual self: now he is part of a corporate self. Nay, he is this corporate self. He used to possess an individual will which is now replaced by the general will of the community as a whole. This notion of the general will is one of the most important—and valuable—elements in the whole of the new theory. Rousseau elaborately explains that by the general will he does not mean the sum of individual wills taken separately; but the corporate will which, from the nature of the case, belongs to a body enjoying a common life, an organised being, of its own. The simple process of counting heads will not necessarily disclose this will. Indeed we learn that "*la volonté générale est rarement celle de tous.*" It implies a collective consciousness, the complete realisation of the different selves with the State, which gives unity to the mass of the people. Rousseau himself is not always consistent in his own account of "*la volonté générale*," and indeed sometimes identifies it with the will of the majority. Such, however, is not his real meaning. Once Platonic ideals reign in the minds of men, it is obvious that they possess through the State a corporate body with a necessarily corporate expression of it in the general will.

The general will results in action, and the most obvious form of action is the enactment of a law. Law with our author is an expression of the general will. Clearly the whole body of citizens must frame the enactment, for the law that gives them being, the Social Contract, confers sovereignty on them. "*Tout Gouvernement légitime est républicain.*" Hence "*pour qu'une volonté générale, il n'est pas toujours qu'elle soit nécessaire qu'elle soit unanime, mais il est nécessaire que toutes les voix soient comptées; toute exclusion formelle rompt la généralité.*" Rousseau was well aware that in Poland one nobleman could interpose his veto, and when he did so, no measure could pass. Obviously such a plan imposed not the general will, but the will of one individual. Rousseau's conception is entirely removed from this, and is thoroughly Greek.

(14) *The Law-giver*

In nothing political do we differ more from the ancient world than in the disappearance of the law-giver, the Moses and Solon, the Lycurgus and Minos, the heaven-born statesman to whom the citizens commit the task of the making of the law. We are not altogether surprised that the classically minded Swiss favours the antique plan. In general his State is a democratic one; there is no Cæsarism in it. Legislation forms the outstanding exception, for in this department of its life we find that the *Contrat Social* calls in aid the law-giver of old.

The making of the Contract bestowed upon man many qualities, and the creation of the Law-giver adds to these qualities. The Moses and the Solon, the Calvin and the Cromwell are vital to the State of the Swiss secretary. Indeed it almost seems as if the law-giver were a more fundamental factor in the Commonwealth than the Contract itself. The Übermensch who is to legislate is subject to the control of "*la volonté générale*." He cannot impose his superhuman code upon the citizens without their consent. None the less, the individualism of the second *Discours* and the opening sentence of the *Contrat Social* are utterly forgotten. The teaching of Locke is not remembered, or is remembered only to be discarded. For Locke allows the individual to lead all his real life, which is his moral life, apart from the State which simply protects his property primarily and his life and liberty perhaps secondarily. Paine followed in the steps of Locke when he wrote that "government, even in the best State, is but a necessary evil; in its worst, an intolerable one." How far we are removed from the position of 1762 is evident when we note that the private life of a man is nothing and his public life everything. Through the signing of the Contract man becomes truly himself. Rousseau insists that "to the gains conferred by the civil State must be added that of his moral freedom. And it is this alone which makes him master of himself. For the promptings of mere appetite are slavery; and obedience to the law which we impose on ourselves is what constitutes freedom."

(15) *Cæsarism*

It is not usual to couple the names of Rousseau and Burke, and we know what the greatest political philosopher of the British race has said about "refining speculatists." Nevertheless, Burke is as much taken aback by the view of the State as a sort of policeman as Rousseau himself. It is no mere body whose chief duty is to ensure the keeping of contracts in business. With all the eloquence and all the insight at his command Burke points out that the State is a divine institution. Rousseau and Burke, much as they would have loathed the idea, are parents of the State to which the teaching of Hegel ultimately led, the Totalitarian State of Hitler or Mussolini or Stalin. It is a wise child who knows his own parents.

Like Burke, Rousseau almost passes by the question of origins. In the *Contrat Social* he has comparatively little to say about such matters. Still, he will not allow such orthodox origins for the State as the family and force. Unlike Aristotle in classical times, and unlike Locke in the seventeenth century, he argues that though the family may have served as the model for the State, yet the State is no mere offshoot of the family. Nor will he admit that force either in the background or in the foreground has founded the State. Neither the family nor force can give birth to right, which is of the very essence of what Contract has effected for the sons of men. The only origin that he can admit is Contract, and he urges this origin as passionately as Burke urged his origin. Though there is not much in the *Contrat Social* on the State as an organism, a matter which is worked out in his *Economie Politique*, yet this conception pervades it, inspiring the notion of "*la volonté générale*." The self of the individual is part and parcel of the State, and indeed so much is this the case that the individual is the State. For he exercises no will save in a corporate capacity. The State is, in the classical sense of the term, a corporation, with a life of its own quite apart from the lives of its members of which it is composed. Clearly there is a distinction—an urgent need for a distinction—between "*la volonté générale*" and "*la volonté de tous*."

Rousseau allows Cæsarism in legislation, yet this Cæsarism, unlike its modern forms, is under the control of "*la volonté générale*." Law is the organ of the general will. The father of the theory of sovereignty, Bodin, is emphatic on the point that the test of supreme power is the right of uncontrolled legislation, and Rousseau in this respect is absolutely at one with him. "It is to the Law alone that man owes justice and freedom. It is this beneficent organ of the will of all which re-establishes in the world of Right the equality which belongs to man in the state of nature. It is this voice from Heaven which dictates to man the commands of the corporate reason (*la raison publique*) and teaches him to obey the maxims of his own judgment and not to be for ever in contradiction with himself. The laws constitute the sole motive power of the body politic, which acts and feels only through them. Without them the State would be nothing more than a body without a soul, bare existence without action. For it is not enough that each should submit himself to the general will. In order to comply with it, he must know it." The signing of the Contract was the action of men of public spirit, and a man of this Greek type is as selfless as mortal man can be. "*En effet*," according to Rousseau, "*la première loi, la seule véritable loi fondamentale, qui découle immédiatement du pacte social, est que chacun préfère en toutes choses le plus grand bien de tous.*"

Rousseau realises as acutely as Locke the distinction between Sovereignty and Government, between the legislative and the executive. The main mark of sovereignty is the legislative power, and whatever body possesses this power is sovereign. Accordingly, so long as the people can legislate freely, he manifests little concern as to the form of government, whether it be monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy. If democracy is the executive as well as the legislative, is there not danger?

Is not the multitude apt to be suddenly swept by gusts of passion? Is it not liable to commit acts of folly and injustice? Is it not likely to allow the few effectively to control affairs? Rousseau comes to the conclusion that "if there were a nation of gods, its form of government would be democratic. So perfect a government is not adapted for men." The plight of monarchy is more serious, for the sovereign may become a tyrant who desires war, "and war is, with tyranny, one of the two worst scourges of mankind. He discerns more hope for aristocracy, as, following in the steps of Montesquieu, he sees it distinguishes sharply between the executive and the legislative. It lodges the former in what we may call a Cabinet. For in truth what Rousseau calls aristocracy we call democracy. The main difference is that the people, not the King or the President, appoints the Cabinet.

The City-State of the Greeks and Romans was both Church and State in one. There is no problem of Church and State till the days of the Reformation. Neither paganism nor Roman Catholicism, in Rousseau's opinion, serves the ends of the State. Paganism is false, and the State cannot worship falsity. History shows that Roman Catholicism has repeatedly waged war with the State, and the Protestantism of Rousseau comes out in the statement that "to offer further proofs of its badness would be mere waste of time." All forms of Christianity are other-worldly, and all of them lay stress on the salvation of the individual soul, and these two ideas work havoc with the Social Contract. Accordingly its creator devises a civil religion with a few and simple dogmas of "the existence of a God of power, reason, goodness and loving providence; the life to come, the happiness of the just and punishment of the wicked; the sanctity of the Social Contract and of the Law. . . . But whoever dares to say 'Outside of the Church none can be saved' ought to be driven out of the State; unless indeed the State is the Church, and the Pontiff the chief magistrate."

The creed of Rousseau meant persecution. The test he applied pressed severely on the one hand on the ardent Roman Catholic and on the other hand on the atheist or agnostic. These sets of men fail to satisfy the test, and as the outcome of this failure they are to be driven out of the State, or, under certain circumstances, they are to be put to death. There is not the slightest reason to think that persecution is the monopoly of the Church: it is the privilege of those who possess power. C. H. Spurgeon once enlivened his discourse in the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, by announcing that the Baptists had never persecuted. When the applause greeting this announcement had ceased, he proceeded to remark: "The Baptists have never persecuted because they have never been in a position to do so." Before the advent of Christianity the classical State persecuted men for the opinions they held, and the case of Socrates is an outstanding one. The first religious persecutors were the Persian Fire-worshipping kings of the Sassanid dynasty, who now and then worried their Christian subjects. The utilitarian State of Locke has persecution among its articles. The classically-inspired State of Rousseau also has persecution among its



articles. Nor is it necessary to say that the anti-Christian Russian State practises persecution on as wholesale a scale as Germany practised it against the Jews and even against Christianity itself.

Rousseau's main ideas remained as they were formulated in the *Contrat Social*. At the end of his life, as during the wonderful years from 1753 to 1762, he advocated the "total annihilation" of the individual, the replacement of the personal by the corporate self, and the corresponding right of every individual to an equal share in the government of the whole. The wider his range of experience grew, the more he realised that the perfect State had its "pattern laid up in the heavens." What Plato realised, he came to realise. The author of the *Gouvernement de Pologne*, written during the winter of 1771, has to provide practical advice for men who seek to devise a constitution for a distracted country, and Rousseau, wise with the wisdom of years, at last recognises that his conception of right is not a workable one. To paraphrase a remark of Bentham (1748-1832), so wrote Rousseau in 1762, but not so Rousseau wrote in 1771. Like Bentham, he came to see that he had greatly overrated human nature. He had over-estimated its intelligence and its capacity to realise the classical ideal.

The *Contrat Social* formed part of the book Rousseau meant to write which he proposed to entitle *Institutions politiques*. He intended to treat of federations. There is a passing reference to this subject in the *Contrat Social* and in his *Émile*. From the scanty remains he left behind him it is clear that he thought that Federation would accomplish for the small State what Contract had accomplished for the individual. It is, in fact, the crown of Contract, completing its work. The Federation will preserve the State from the danger of war, and he has the small State specially in his mind. It will also preserve the State from the no less serious danger of tyranny. Between States he dreams of something more serious than a mere treaty of alliance. Still, he remains in doubt, for how will the plan of federation interfere with his favourite, the small State? If the new bond trenches on the sovereignty of the small State, can he favour it? He envisages the problem, though he leaves no solution of it. Nevertheless, it is the mark of a great man that he foresees problems which he leaves to after ages to solve as best they may. It is over 160 years since the death of Rousseau, and we are still trying to settle the relationship of the individual to the State and the relation of one State to other States.

If Rousseau had been a happy man, if he had never written the second *Discours*, *Émile* and the *Contrat Social*, would he have cared so intensely for the public weal? Would there have been a French Revolution? Of course there would, though it took the form it did partly because of the American War of Independence, partly because of the ideas of progress in the air, and partly because of the work of the Encyclopædists in general and of the work of Rousseau in particular. Had he written nothing at all, famine and taxation would have provided causes for the French Revolution. In a land where the peasants pay eighty per cent in taxes and *corvées*, and where it is not possible to buy

bread in the great towns, there is no need of a philosopher to produce an upheaval. In the words of Taine the Revolution was a *jacquerie rurale* before it touched the malcontents of Paris. All that Rousseau did was to afford an *état sentimental*, which made the Revolution what it was—a sort of orgy of hope and sensibility in the midst of bloodshed. The bloodshed, however, should not be put down to his account alone. The *Jacquerie* and the Wars of Religion showed all the French could do without applying to the little man from Geneva. What was his was that new vein of optimism, not yet exhausted (still immensely powerful, for instance, in America), which led men to conceive that by abolishing some superannuated privilege, or by following some new course of life, or inventing some new doctrine, by some new method of democracy or old method of autocracy like the Totalitarian State, the world might instantly enter on a smooth career of happiness and harmony. These bands of hope and manufacturers of transformation scenes are some of the indestructible offspring of Rousseau. The fanciful and foolish idealising, which is now and then the curse of the modern world, also traces its descent from him. Thinking of this aspect of his influence, Lord Morley said to a friend shortly before his death, "Would it not have been better for the world if Rousseau had never been born?" According to Einstein, Gauss set forth mathematical conceptions that would probably have occurred to no brain but his. Be this as it may, the problems that occurred to Rousseau's brain would have occurred to some other brain, though we feel bound to admit that he inaugurated a new state of mind which on the one hand helps individualism just as much as on the other hand it helps totalitarianism.

## CHAPTER VI

### GERMAN CONCEPTIONS OF THE STATE

#### (1) *The Trust Conception*

THE legal legacy of the English-speaking races is one of sheer individualism. The rights of A, B and C are the rights of X, Y and Z, and these rights are personal, unguaranteed by any body whether sitting at Westminster or at Washington, and therefore not liable to have that guarantee removed by the State. Take the weighty conclusion of Sir F. Pollock and F. W. Maitland's great *History of English Law*. The age between 1154 and 1272 "was the critical moment in English legal history and therefore in the innermost history of our land and our race. It was the moment when old custom was brought into contact with new science. Much in our national life and character depended on the result of that contact. It was a perilous moment. There was the danger of an unintelligent 'reception' of misunderstood and alien institutions. There was the danger of a premature and formless equity. On the other hand,

there was the danger of a stubborn *Nolumus*, a refusal to learn from foreigners and from the classical past. If that had not been avoided, the crash would have come in the sixteenth century and Englishmen would have been forced to receive without criticism what they once despised. Again, we have stood at the parting of the ways of the two most vigorous systems of law that the modern world has seen, the French and the English. Not about what may seem weightier matters of jurisprudence do these sisters quarrel, but about 'mere matters of procedure,' as some would call them, the one adopting the canonical inquest of witnesses, the other retaining, developing, transmuting the old *enquête du pays*. But the fate of two national laws lies there. Which country made the wiser choice no Frenchman and no Englishman can impartially say: no one should be judge in his own cause. But of this there can be no doubt, that it was for the good of the whole world that one race stood apart from its neighbours, turned away its eyes at an early time from the fascinating pages of the *Corpus Iuris*, and more Roman than the Romanists, made the grand experiment of a new formularly system. Nor can we part with this age without thinking once more of the permanence of its work. Those few men who were gathered at Westminster round Pateshull and Raleigh and Bracton were penning writs that would run in the name of the kingless commonwealth on the other shore of the Atlantic Ocean; they were making right and wrong for us and for our children."

Under the cover of the individual, singular as it may seem, we have instituted the legal Trust. Individualism stood in the way of corporate life, and this real difficulty was surmounted by the creation of the Trust, the corporation. The State repealed a few persecuting statutes, allowed the nonconformist not to attend his parish church and did not punish him for attending his own conventicle. The Trust did the rest. For such natural persons as trustees might own the chapel. F. W. Maitland regards "the greatest and most distinctive achievement performed by Englishmen in the field of jurisprudence" to be the development from century to century of the Trust idea. The gulf between the English-speaking races and the European is obvious in the famous French declaration of 18th August, 1792, "A State that is truly free ought not to suffer within its bosom any corporation, not even as, being dedicated to public instruction, have merited well of the country." At this date England was honeycombed with corporations dedicated to public instruction—and much else. The French State was legally one and indivisible, but the English State, through the operation of the Trust, was nothing of the kind.

## (2) *Centralisation*

In Europe there have been few centralised States before the nineteenth century. On Bismarck's birthday, 1st April, 1815, they used to say there was 'a German State for every day of the year. In the Palatinate, only 105 square miles in extent, there were 44 independent States. France is

the signal exception to this statement. There the policy of centralisation is of long date, running back to the days of Louis XIV, if not to those of Richelieu himself. Voltaire realised this so keenly that he put into the mouth of Louis XIV the words, *L'état, c'est moi*. Tocqueville certainly proved that centralisation is a phenomenon of pre-revolutionary France. Absolutism was not far away when Roman law looked on the prince as *legibus solutus quod principi placuit habet vigorem*. Roman limitations on such an absolutist maxim were overlooked, and it accorded with the course of French history as developed by the Bourbons. The European sovereign in theory inherited the Roman conceptions involved in the absolutist maxim, and he began to regard himself as few English kings after Charles I dared to do. Besides, except in France the authority of the sovereign was more nominal than real, and the more nominal authority is, the more stress is laid upon it. For a time Peter the Great counted, but the authority of the Tsar waned towards the conclusion of the eighteenth century. Then rulers like Catherine the Great of Russia, Joseph II of Austria, and Charles III of Spain aspired to assume the rôle of the benevolent despot. If it is the mark of a good court to increase its jurisdiction, it is also the mark of the benevolent despot to increase his.

In theory the Holy Roman Empire still existed, though since the end of the fifteenth century it was, in the judgment of Voltaire, neither Holy, nor Roman, nor an Empire. Nevertheless, it did not formally dissolve till August 1806, when Francis II announced to the Germanic Diet his resignation of the imperial crown. Then the oldest *political* institution in the world, dating back to the great days of Augustus, came to an end. Within that Empire during the eighteenth century Austria and Prussia were contending for the mastery, a mastery settled at first by Bismarck in 1866 and then by Hitler's amazing coup of 1938. Prussia fell from the high position she occupied in the palmy days of Frederick the Great, and the deeper she fell, the more attention her publicists bestowed upon the true place of the State.

The powerful school founded by Kant, Fichte, and Hegel idealised the State at the expense of the individual. Anyone aware of the grim history of the individualism of England, exhibited in the history of children and women working in factories, even in the eighteenth century, realised to the full the bankruptcy of the idea of taking the individual as the sole basis of reckoning. The community offered a far finer prospect of reconciling the life of the individual with the life of the State, and thinkers abroad start with the community. The condition of England during the first half of the nineteenth century lent no presumption that the theory of individualism had much to commend itself. True, she defeated Napoleon, but the tragedy is that her enormous efforts to crush him allowed her no leisure to consider the welfare of the factory hand. Besides, even if she had the leisure the dominant theory of *laissez-faire* forbade this consideration. Corporateness had much more right to commend itself than individualism then. Rousseau's theory of contract exercised a far-reaching power over the course of the French

Revolution, but that was its swan song. The work of his theory had been done, and done for ever. It is unhistorical, illogical, and practically dangerous. How could it survive such a startling indictment? The outcome is that nowadays we tend to replace individual rights by collective duties, and here the German school, as represented by Kant, Fichte, and Hegel, has rendered pre-eminent service. This school suffers at the hands of its disciples because they have elevated the State to such a degree that its members seem to have nothing but duties to discharge with few of their rights to be observed. *Le défaut de ses qualités* is as true of the theory as it is of its creator.

Kant (1724-1804) never idealised the State after the fashion of Fichte and Hegel. "The life-history of Kant," writes Heine, "is not easy to describe; for he had neither life nor history. He lived a mechanical, almost impersonal, bachelor existence in a quiet corner of Königsberg. The cathedral clock did not perform its daily task with less passion or greater regularity. Everything had its appointed time. The neighbours knew it was half-past three when Immanuel Kant, in his grey coat and cane in hand, left his house and moved towards the little row of lime-trees, which is still called the Philosophers' Walk. Eight times up and down he strolled, whatever the weather. What a contrast between the outer life of the man and his world-convulsing thoughts! If the burghers of Königsberg had known the full significance, they would have shrunk from him more than from the executioner. The great destroyer resembled Robespierre in many ways. Both had the same inexorable, prosaic honesty. Both possessed the same talent of suspicion: the one directing it against ideas and calling it criticism, the other against human beings and calling it republican virtue. Above all, they were both petty bourgeois, whom Nature designed to measure out coffee and sugar; but destiny ruled that they should weigh far different articles, and placed a King in the scales of one and God in the scales of the other. We had our revolts in the world of mind, and the French in the world of matter; and we were as excited over the destruction of the old dogmatism as they over the storming of the Bastille." Kant's is the life of a searcher after truth, with the penalties attached thereto, one being that, as Maine de Biran states, if you pierce truth, truth will pierce you. Rousseau influenced Kant in many directions, and not least in converting him to a belief in democracy. Just as the democracy of the American Fathers consisted of voters of one colour, so the democracy of Kant consisted of voters of one sex. "There was a time," owned Kant, "when I believed that knowledge constituted the worth of man, and I despised the ignorant masses; but Rousseau set me right. I learned to honour men; and I should feel myself of far less use than the artisan if I did not believe that my reflections would aid in restoring the rights of humanity."

### (3) *Rousseau and Kant*

The American and the French Revolutions engaged the eager attention of the calm philosopher of Königsberg. The only occasion

when he missed his stroll in the Philosophers' Walk was the afternoon he received Rousseau's *Émile*: he could not tear himself away from it. In 1784 in the age of the Aufklärung he raised the question, what is enlightenment? The motto of the Aufklärung was "Dare to make use of your intelligence," and Kant presses this imperative summons on his generation. He pleads that "a larger measure of civic freedom appears favourable to liberty of thought. The instinct of free thought gradually works on the mind of the people and finally on the principles of the government, which finds it possible to trust man, who, after all, is more than a machine, according to his worth." It was a plea worthy of the man who confesses "two things fill the mind with ever-increasing wonder and awe the more often and the more intensely the mind of thought is drawn to them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me."<sup>1</sup> Kant brings philosophy under morality though we could wish he had reversed the process. He takes his order of subject from the Roman jurists, yet his treatment is his own. Take his attitude to property. The Roman conception of it was that the right to it proceeds from the individual; the feudal and the Rousseauan, that it comes from the community; and the early Rousseauan and the Proudhonian, that it has no existence save in custom—and indeed in wrong. Proudhon employs the strong phrase, *La propriété, c'est le vol*. Kant decisively rejects this last conception, and hovers between the first and second. He will not allow the simple derivation of property from the individual who has spent labour upon it. On the other hand, he will allow the abstract right of the individual to will, and therefore to appropriate, an object—if he has not thereby injured his neighbour. The supreme justification of property lies in the necessities of man. If he did not appropriate the fruits of the earth, he would starve. As man represents his species, he appropriates what would perish but for his action. The state of nature passes into the civil state, and with this passing the right of property vests itself in the individual. That is, Kant admits individual property, but with this admission he is careful to allow that the right of the community qualifies the right of the individual to hold property. It is characteristic of him, as it is of the French Constitution of 1792, that he warmly attacks corporations, lay and clerical. He insists that the Sovereign is the only supreme magistrate, and is vitally "lord of the land, or, more precisely supreme landowner." No Trust may stand between him and his land. Rousseau too recognises that property is only possible in and through the State. In fact, property and the State are born together and die together.

While Kant and Rousseau part company in their attitude to the Social Contract, they are alike in the position they assume to right. "The only original Right," according to Kant, "belonging to each man in virtue of his humanity, is Freedom. . . . Every action is in accordance with Right which enables the freedom of each man's will to subsist side by side with the freedom of every other man, according to an

<sup>1</sup> This is the conclusion of the *Critique of Judgment*.

universal law." Here is a sentiment with which Rousseau would have concurred. It is also quite in keeping with the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen* of 1789. In the forefront Kant places his view, "Act according to the idea of Right is a demand made on me by ethics." It is a course of conduct vital to the permanent well-being of the State. A right in politics can never be self-regarding, for every right bestowed upon a man means an obligation attaching to other men in respect of his rights, and vice-versa. A right, however, with Kant is more static than dynamic, and yet he lived in that dynamic age, the age of Napoleon. He shrinks from Revolution with all the horror engendered by one of the most methodical of mortals. For a moment he contemplates the deposition of the monarch, but only for a moment. The execution of Charles I and of Louis XVI proved too much for him. "The alteration of the constitution can only be effected by the Sovereign by way of reform, not by the people by way of revolution." Accordingly, "Rebellion, when a Constitution is already established, is the overthrow of all Civil Right, and consequently of all Right." Napoleon had taught Kant much, and not least was the lesson that a change of the civil constitution frequently spelt its dissolution. There is the divine rights of things as they are. The people emphatically have no rights against their rulers. They cannot resist the unlawful actions of princes. Such an attitude shows us how true his judgment was when he described the German nation as the one which more easily than any other civilised nation obeys the Government under which it happens to be.

#### (4) *Inter-State Relations*

Like so many great thinkers, Kant is inconsistent, and he is not unwilling in the closing section of his *Rechtslehre* to concede that "the spirit of the existing original Contract carries with it an obligation on the constituent Power to bring the *form* of the Government into harmony with its idea." To achieve this object a series of "gradual and unbroken changes" is desirable, and thus cautiously Kant—who was a cautious man with Scots blood in his veins—admits the conception of progress. It is a conception mainly due to French thinkers, and men like Condorcet had scattered its ideas in the mental atmosphere of the age. Of course it disallows the hateful notion of the social contract, and it no less allows, what Kant loves, the organic life of the community. The idea of a Social Contract is to him scaffolding and machinery. It is the community that breathes inward life and growth. The Social Contract implies the individualistic angle of approach. Kant, like Burke, cannot conceive the individual except in relation to other individuals. The rights of the individual, *qua* individual, are a figment of the imagination always, everywhere.

History does not disclose a single instance in which contract between individuals originates a State. Besides, if individuals make contracts, they create private rights, not public. But may not the Social Contract

enshrine an ideal of the State? Kant does not quite like this idea, though he admits that it may be a "necessary" idea, for instance, when the English called William of Orange to their throne. At best, it suggests that society is linked together with the satisfaction of justice and the protection of individual liberty. A man keeps the Social Contract, but he keeps it on the ground that he can be compelled to obey a law which he has freely accepted. Rousseau assumes that when man entered into the Social Contract, his will was good and became worse. Kant assumes the very reverse, and as he allowed a discreet belief in progress he could not very well do other than he did.

Inconsistent he was: vacillating he also was. What is freedom? Is it the whim of the individual? or is it the power of choosing a direction developing his higher faculties? Locke, Hume, and Rousseau so vacillated, and yet Kant's vacillation was valuable. According to his *Theory and Practice* it is clear "nobody can compel me to be happy in one way, but everybody may seek his happiness that way which he considers best so long as he does not interfere with the freedom of another to aspire to similar ends which can coexist with the freedom of everybody according to a universal law." He does not, however, raise the question, How far can the will of the individual proceed without infringing the sphere of the freedom of another? Yet with him the individual is not isolated but bound. If one links on the idea of duty to that of right one destroys Rousseau's assumption of individual isolation. Kant demonstrates that this linking together of duty and right is incompatible with the idea of the former. For social right comes from moral relations, developed in the organised civil community. These relations exist in the state of nature, as conceived by Rousseau or indeed by anyone else. In fact, we are led back to the Aristotelian view that the State is prior to the individual.

A philosophic Jew, Moses Mendelssohn, had maintained that the race does not really progress, but only moves forward and backward, resembling the stone of Sisyphus. Kant assumes a steady advance in culture and morality, often interrupted, but never brought to a halt. Philosophy, for instance, climbs a hundred steps up the ladder, and falls back ninety. Still, there is a clear gain of ten steps. "I need not prove it; it is for my opponents to prove the opposite. All around us is evidence that we have recently made moral progress, and the cry of degeneration arises from our standing on a higher platform, whence we can look farther ahead and realise more fully the difference between what we are and what we should be." None the less, in spite of his optimism he is plainly perplexed. For the sum of man's actions is "a web of folly, childish vanity, and often of the idlest wickedness and spirit of destruction." Another type of man, Edward Gibbon (1737-94), described history as a "register of the crimes, the follies, and misfortunes of mankind." Kant detects a meaning in the currents and the cross currents of human affairs, and it is not unlike Adam Smith's "invisible hand." With the stream of righteousness exists a natural purpose. The laws of civilisation are not known, and he suggests that some future



genius may accomplish for social phenomena what Kepler and Newton had accomplished for heavenly phenomena. In the meantime Nature is guiding the race towards the goal of perpetual peace. And yet he is living in the midst of the wars of Napoleon! Sometimes Kant seems as remote from human affairs as Hegel who took his *Phenomenology* to the printers in Jena to find a battle raging in its streets between the French and the Prussians. Still, let us hear Kant on what the future holds in store for us. "As universal violence compels a community to submit to law, so continual wars at last bring peoples, even against their will, into a cosmopolitan constitution, at any rate into a federation according to an agreed international law. Human nature nowhere appears less attractive than in the relations of nations, and safety will only be found in laws to which every State must submit. If it be objected that this is only a theory of the Schools, I for my part place confidence therein. Since respect for right and duty is ever strong in human nature, I cannot and will not regard it as so sunk in evil that the practical reason will not one day, after many failures, prove victorious." And this aspiration appeared in Germany in 1793!

His dislike of war peeps out in many places. He finds room for it even in the *Critique of Judgment* where he insists on limitations to it. "War, if conducted in accordance with the rules and with respect for the rights of civilians, has something sublime about it. A prolonged peace favours the commercial spirit and a debasing self-interest, cowardice, and effeminacy, and tends to degrade the character of the nation." War, however, is incompatible with the idea of progress on which he sets store. His mind is much better expressed in his *Perpetual Peace*, 1795. In it he works out a connection between democracy and peace. Only republican States, we learn, will pursue peace. He believes in the goodness of mankind and the worth of each man who composes it. The idea of right is one the individual cannot forget. Hear Kant's winged words: "In every man we must honour the dignity of the whole race, and no human being must be used as a mere instrument of the ends of other men."

The State, he argues, is based on law; law is based on reason and morality. The relation of one State to another is based on the same foundations, but not without reference to the law of nature. Within the State the individual limits his lawless freedom for his own good; without the State he suffers a similar limitation. For a man must be a good cosmopolitan as well as a good citizen. Is *Perpetual Peace* a dream? He tells us that he saw *Perpetual Peace* as a legend on a Dutch innkeeper's sign-board above the picture of a churchyard. Well, nations may be churchyards—if they will not maintain peace with one another. He pleads for the Platonic philosopher-king. Surely he can guide the rational men he governs, and other kings can do the same. If not, what is the future of civilisation? Is there a future? Goethe and Schiller, with many others, read *Perpetual Peace*. "A very little work of Kant has surprised me," wrote Goethe to Schiller. "It is a very valuable product of his well-known method of thought, and, like all

coin from his mint, contains the most glorious passages; but in composition and style he out-Kants himself." The view of the two poets appears in the *Xenien*.

### *Perpetual Peace*

Let each but grasp his truest advantage and grant to his neighbour  
Equal advantages, then permanent peace is secured.

### *Perpetual War*

No man living is pleased with the share that Fortune assigns him;  
Thus the causes of war ever and ever recur.

### (5) *The Two Fichtes*

Fichte (1762-1814) was a humble Saxon peasant who sat at the feet of Kant. He never possessed the phenomenal calm of his master. All Fichte's writings, according to Treitschke, are orations, and they are far more calls to action than calls to thought. Half in jest and half in earnest, Heine compared him to Napoleon. Both, he thinks, represented the great, implacable Ego to which thought and action are one. The influence of the two Rousseaus is evident in the life of Fichte. He began his intellectual life as an ardent individualist, and he ended it as a no less ardent advocate of what he regarded as "the absolute State." Like Rousseau, he favours the surrender—subjection is his term—of the self by the individual to the State. Unlike Rousseau, he comes to entertain little belief in popular control. His chief works are the *Beiträge zur Berichtigung der Urtheile über die französische Revolution* (1793), his *Grundlage des Naturrechts* (1796), his *Der geschlossene Handelstaat* (1800), his *Die Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters* (1804-05), his famous *Reden an die deutsche Nation* (1807-08), and his important *Staatslehre* (1813). Early in life he announced, "I intend not only to think, but to act." He was at least as much a man of action as a man of thought.

His first political pamphlet in 1793 was *A Demand for the restitution of freedom of thought from the Princes of Europe who have hitherto suppressed it*. No French revolutionist could have delivered a more slashing assault on royalty. "In his violent outbreaks against the nobility," thinks Treitschke, "speaks the wrath of the Saxon peasant's son." The Social Contract colours the whole pamphlet. For the individual retains in perpetuity certain fundamental rights against society and the State. The people are sovereign and the individual is free. These are the two vital necessities. Nor, in spite of his wrath, does he expect the world to attain this lofty ideal in a moment. For its attainment freedom of thought is vital, and no less vital is the freedom of the expression of thought.

The *Beiträge* is as individualistic in outlook as the *Staatslehre* is the exact opposite. In the former the individual is powerful, the State

powerless: in the latter the individual is powerless, the State powerful. In the former he recognises that if the State does everything on behalf of the people, all tends to turn to machinery with the mass of the people simply as wheels to be driven. He accepts the teaching of the individualist Rousseau in the *Beiträge* which on the whole follows the *Contrat Social*. Of course, Rousseau was, in spite of his private life, mainly a moral teacher, and yet in the *Beiträge* Fichte banishes morality from politics, as Machiavelli and Hobbes had done before him. The State is a purely voluntary association to be supported or not by the whims of the citizens composing it. It is therefore a rope of sand liable to crumble into nothing at the first touch. Manifestly moral law disappears, for there is no sense of obligation between man and man. "In the sphere of politics the moral law is silent," and was necessarily so in Fichte's State. He is clearly aware that he is revealing the weakness of the individualistic position when he insists on the absolute separation of politics from morals. How can a man in the State he conceives turn questions of natural right into a defence of the moral law? How can the individual afford to stand by himself? The moral law is fundamentally the relationship of man to man, and if there is no such relationship in the voluntary State, where is morality? Fichte's predecessors were more or less aware of this incongruity, and their way out of it was to confine the excursions of morality into politics within rigid limits. Fichte, with more logic, excludes morals completely. In the *Beiträge* he also expresses the inconsistency of the champions of contract. If we rid politics of morality, we eliminate compulsion. But this is the very thing that the supporters of Contract conceptions would never allow. They insisted on the consent of the individual to the Contract, and they also insisted on the coercive power of the State, which is, as Euclid would say, absurd. The truth is that you can only control the individual in the name of a law which exists independently of him. Nevertheless, in spite of Fichte morals and politics, right and duty, are so joined together that they can never be successfully divided—except by the theorist of the Fichte type. He will divide them, though there cannot be a more formidable task.

Fichte's stark individualism emerges repeatedly. "The question whether a contract once made can be altered and the question whether it can be made in the first instance are identical." A man may withdraw from the State if he pleases provided he offers compensation for any loss others may suffer by his withdrawal. Then he can declare, "To this moment you have discharged your debts to me, and I mine to you. From this moment you cease to discharge them; I do the same. The account balances; we are quits." Not only does he take up this posture but he is also willing to anticipate the Pluralist conception of our generation by allowing the existence of bodies within the State. In fact, we cannot imagine a more far-reaching conception of individualist politics than that contained in the *Beiträge*. There are, of course, contradictions in it, as there must almost inevitably be in all statements of individualism. We learn that "the only possible end" of the State is

to train men in the service of freedom; that ceaseless progress in that service is the inalienable right of man; and that the moral law imposes such progress on him as a duty. But what becomes of the statement that "in the sphere of politics the moral law is silent"? We are in truth moving to the attitude taken up by his *Staatslehre* where emphasis is frequently laid on the view that "the law of Right is essentially a moral principle." The conception of right grows with time, lives by progress, and progress depends on the nationality where it exists.

To Fichte, as to Hegel, history is progressive. In his *Grundzüge* he develops his view on progress which was one in which mankind assists. In his patriotic *Discourses to the German Nation* he lays down the idea that the progress of culture and science depends for the future mainly on Germany. In his appeal to rouse the patriotism of his own people, he was bound perhaps to enlarge on the work of the Fatherland, but he certainly gave an unfortunate turn to German thought when he laid such emphasis on its contribution to it. It amounts to the *hubris* the Greeks so much dreaded.

To Fichte the process of the universe tends towards a full realisation of freedom which is an ever-receding goal. The nearer you approach it, the farther you remove yourself from it. Witness the words of Malebranche, "If I held truth captive in my hand, I should open my hand and let it fly, in order that I might again pursue and capture it." Lessing's choice is even better known. "Did the Almighty," he declared, "holding in his right hand Truth, deign to tender to me the one I might prefer, in all humility, but without hesitation, I should request Search after Truth." It is only by the search after truth that we can make it entirely our own, and thus progress. "We live forward, we understand backward," according to Kierkegaard. As Sir William Hamilton tersely remarked, "It is not the goal, but the course which makes us happy," a sentiment that Fichte would have fully endorsed. In the *Grundzüge* he has forsaken the individualistic conception and has travelled to the view that the true motive of morality is not the salvation of man but the progress of humanity. It is noteworthy that in spite of his belittlement of the rôle of the individual he develops the view that it is the outstanding function of the savant to discover truths which are a condition of social progress. The savant, who so employs his powers, is incarnate reason in the world.

#### (6) *The Subjection of the Citizen*

In the *Grundlage* we still witness the stress laid on the Social Contract and the divorce of politics and morals. The form of Fichte's thought is the same: the reality is different. Man, *qua* man, loses his rights, and a socialistic State takes his place. The transformation in outlook is manifest in such a statement as this, "It is only among men that man becomes man." If man is to exist at all, it must be as one of a number." Natural law once more comes into its own. Nevertheless, moral law is

absolute while the law of natural right is only permissive. "The law of Right . . . has nothing to do with the law of moral conduct. The moral law is a categorical command. The law of Right is never a command: it is never more than a permission to enforce a right. Indeed such an enforcement of right may be forbidden by the moral law." In another passage he brings out this distinction. "The reasonable being is not absolutely bound, in virtue of his own reasonableness, to will the freedom of all other reasonable beings. This principle marks the dividing line between the sphere of Natural Right and that of Morals; it is the essential sign of an accurate conception of the former science. In the sphere of Morals we are confronted with an obligation to will the freedom of others. But in the sphere of Natural Right we are only entitled to tell a man that such and such will be the consequences of his action. If he is prepared to take the consequences, or if he hopes to escape them, it is impossible to argue the question with him any further." In point of fact, however, the distinction drawn is one impossible to carry out in practical life. Whatever we urge on behalf of the moral law we can also urge on behalf of natural right. Besides, is the moral law always binding everywhere and for all? Is it never right to tell a lie? A madman asks you if the man he wants to murder has just met you. Are you bound to tell him the truth? Is the man who values the sanctity of human life bound to forbear from shooting the enemy on the field of battle? There is no need to invoke the aid of casuistry at greater length, but we cannot see that the moral law is inevitably binding. There are exceptions to it, though we are quite prepared to allow with Fichte that the exception proves the rule.

The socialistic applications of the State concern us. By the Social Contract Fichte asks the citizen to surrender his natural claim to property for an equal and definite share. The State is to determine how many shall labour in each industry, and shall fix prices on the principle that equal labour must command an equal share in the good things of life. None but the State must undertake foreign trade. He is travelling from a mechanical conception of the State to an organic one, and the birth pangs are severe. With pain he puts forth the idea of a natural organism, which lies at the base of the speculation of Hegel and of Comte. "This image—of an organic life in nature—has often been used of late to express the unity which underlies the different departments of Government; but, so far as I know, it has not yet been used as a symbol for the whole life of the community. In an organic life every part is what it is in virtue of its connection with the rest; apart from that connection, it would be nothing at all; for, without the interaction of organic forces, maintaining themselves in mutual equilibrium, there would be no permanent life but only an eternal conflict between being and not being—a result which is absolutely inconceivable. In the same way, it is only as a member of the community that man attains a definite place in the series of living things, a resting-point in the flux of nature; and no man attains this definite place as against other men and against nature except in virtue of this definite relation to the whole. Apart

from this relation, the individual would only be capable of enjoying the passing moment and not of the smallest calculation upon the future; and with the knowledge that there are always others of the same nature as ourselves who had the same right to enjoy, even this fleeting enjoyment would be haunted by a sense of wrong. Nature is constituted by the organic union of all her forces; humanity by the organic union of all individual wills." The closing remark is of course akin to Kant's famous utterance, "Nothing in the world or out of it can be called good without qualification of the good will."

In the *Grundlage* only the State is to indulge in foreign trade. In the *Handelstaat* there is to be no foreign trade at all, for the State must be autarkic. This way, and this way only, lies its salvation. His conception of property shares this point of view. He disentangles himself from the feudal conception of it just as he travels from the belief in it as the absolute right of the individual. There is a sphere of activity which means more than the sphere of objects. Property is no longer an object to which a man has a right of ownership: it is the free exercise of his activities, activities limited by his obligations to the community in general and to others in particular.

Like Kant, he is anxious to avoid war. One expedient is the self-sufficing State. Commercial rivalry and the struggle for territorial aggrandisement would thereby come to an end. One more war, so he believed, would determine the "natural boundaries" of nations for ever, and then there would be "perpetual peace." Besides, he, forgetful of his early teaching, sees in the exaltation of the individual at the expense of the community not a little of the causes of the fall of civilisation. The happy remedy is to exalt the community at the expense of the individual, and all will be well. In his system of despotic radicalism, to borrow a phrase of Treitschke, the man is lost in the citizen. We may add that the citizen is lost in the State.

### (7) *The Evolutionary Beatitude*

The political philosophy prevalent in Germany during the generation before 1939 is to be found in the writings of the later Fichte. He is the father of the doctrines of Treitschke: both were Saxons. Pan-Germanism is implicit in the *Grundzüge*, where we learn that "it is true that the civilisation of each individual State is no more than one-sided. But every State is tempted to regard its own civilisation as the best, and to believe that the inhabitants of other Empires should hold themselves lucky to become members of it. . . . The most civilised State in every age, without exception, is also the most aspiring." It is not difficult to effect the transition to Houston S. Chamberlain's *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*.

Fichte adopts the evolutionary beatitude, Blessed are the strong, for they shall prey on the weak. There is little to choose between the *Principe* of Machiavelli and the *Grundzüge* of Fichte, who teaches in it

that "it is the natural tendency of every civilised State to widen its borders on every side and to take up all available territory into its own civic unity. So it was in ancient history. . . . And in modern times, as each State has acquired inward strength and as the power of the Church, whose interest it was to divide Christendom, has been gradually broken, this tendency to set up a universal Monarchy over the whole of Christendom was bound to reveal itself. . . . Hence it is that every State strives either to assert its rule over Christendom, or, failing that, to win the power of doing so at some future time; to maintain the balance of power, that is, in case another State seeks to disturb it; and, in dead secret, to secure the chance of disturbing it hereafter on its own account. Such is the natural and necessary course of events, whether it be admitted, whether it even be consciously realised, or no." This fashion of dotting the i's and crossing the t's of Rousseau's ideas is not one that can commend itself to the conscience of mankind.

Fichte asserts in the plainest terms the eternal privilege of those who make contracts to break them. He bases his plea on the Machiavellian separation of politics from morals and on the absurdity of turning questions of natural right into a crusade on behalf of honesty and the moral law. Rousseau's law-giver appears in the form of the *Übermensch*. Anticipating both Carlyle and Nietzsche, Fichte writes: "To compel men to adopt the rightful form of government, to impose Right on them by force, is not only the right, but the sacred duty of every man who has both the insight and the power to do so. There may even be circumstances in which the single man has this right"—a Herr Hitler, for instance—"against the whole of mankind; for, as against him and Right, there is no man who has either rights or liberty. He may compel them to Right, that being an absolutely definite conception, valid for all men alike; a conception which they all ought to have and which they all will have as soon as they raise themselves to his level of intelligence, and which, in the meantime, thanks to the grace of God working in him, he holds in the name of all and as their representative. The truth of this conception he must take upon his own conscience. He, we may say, is the compulsive power, ordained of God."

Fichte's glowing nationalism appears, and he repudiates the anarchy set forth in his early writings. As he lectures on the characteristics of his age he informs us that its political character is "the interpenetration of the citizen by the State; and this is a necessary purpose of the State and nature, not a subject of censure, as it has been made by a certain visionary scheme of unrestricted freedom. True freedom can only be attained by means of the highest obedience." The good European speaks in these words, "Where is the fatherland of the truly cultured European? It is Europe, and more particularly that State which at any given time occupies the highest point of culture. From this cosmopolitan standpoint, we need not trouble ourselves as to the doings and fortunes of particular units." It is the last time the good European speaks; for the rest of his life he is swallowed up by the German patriot face to face with Napoleon. The *Addresses to the German Nation* proved a true

trumpet-call to all, meeting with an eagerly patriotic response. The guns of Jena taught men that they could no longer live on the system of Frederick the Great, but on a system suited to their own day, a system too that exacted the sternest of sacrifices from the citizen. German nationalism was at last born, and with the wars of the French Revolution nationality presents itself as among the greatest forces of modern history. Fichte's opening address sounds the new note, as he hears the roll of the French drums beneath his windows. "I speak for Germans, brushing aside all the differences which unhappy events have created during centuries in the single nation. These lectures, delivered first to you, are meant for the whole nation. They are intended to kindle a patriotic flame." What will be the outcome?—"For the first time, a true kingdom of right will be created by the Germans, such as the whole world has never seen, in all enthusiasm for the liberty of the citizen which we find in the classical world and without the slavery of the majority." Such Germans possess a sounder national life than any Latins. Therefore they are destined to be the political evangelists of Europe.

#### (8) *Historical Epochs*

The *Staatslehre* reflects the struggle against Napoleon. Fichte silently throws away the doctrine of contract which so long misled him. Away too with the individual! Welcome the dictator who may save men from themselves! Hero-worship is the order of the day—if you can find the hero. The only check assumed by the hero or dictator is the tender mercies of his own conscience, and that, as we all realise in the Germany of before 1945, is not at all likely to turn him into a coward. Every enlightened man ought to compel other men to adopt the rightful form of government and to impose right upon them by force. *A fortiori*, the dictator enjoys the supreme privilege of so compelling them. The *Staatslehre* is to "set forth the outward conditions, those imposed by the world of man as we know it, under which moral freedom is to be achieved." Significantly, we learn that if there were only one will in the world, there would be no outward obstacle to its freedom. But is there ever one will? Surely the dictator is the very man to coerce warring wills into one, and so hasten the progress of mankind. Force and right, according to Joubert, are the governors of this world; force till right is ready—*la force en attendant le droit*. Fichte remembered force, and forgot right.

Fichte divides history into five historical epochs. The first is that of instinctive reason, the age of innocence; the second, that of authoritarian reason; the third, that of enfranchisement, the age of scepticism and unregulated liberty; the fourth, that of conscious reason; and the fifth, that of sovereign reason as art. According to Fichte, he was living in the third stage. We have broken with authority, and do not yet possess a clear and disciplined knowledge of reason. The savant will discover truths which it is the bounden duty of the dictator to enforce,



and thereby hasten the progress of civilisation. Rousseau thought of the "compulsion to be free" while Fichte thought of the "compulsion to be hastened on the path of freedom." This hastening may be due to the direction of Providence, shaping to its own purpose the designs of man. It may also be due to an incarnation of the divine will in a man or in a body of men who are the chosen channel of communication between God and man, the appointed means through which the will of God is wrought in history. Fichte favours the latter alternative. "If this be so, it follows that a part of the work of freedom is due to the prompting of individual resolve by a God of reason, wisdom, and goodness. Providence, miracle; a miracle resembling a natural event, which is only conceivable if brought about with a moral end and as a means to such an end." If such an incarnation takes place in a dictator, progress is assured. "The manifestation of God in history," such is Fichte's conviction, "is a life: a life that continuously unfolds itself; an ever fresh and creative life. This is its very being; and for this reason it moves forward to ever greater perfection. No stagnation, no back-sliding. . . . And that in virtue of the general law which limits the freedom of all free individuals. From this perfectibility it is not within their power to fall. So far, all outward experience to the contrary, their freedom does not extend. This endless advance is not the work of any single individual, but of the inner law which governs all individuals and will continue to govern them to all eternity." None the less, the heaven-sent man will accomplish much for this endless advance. Napoleon used to say that what we want was not men but the man. Fichte ardently wanted the man. The Utopias of the eighteenth century idolised the individual: the Utopias of the twentieth century idolised the State.

When the man at last arrived, men would be passive instruments in his hands or, if you will, the hands of the State. The citizen will come to realise that all he thinks and does should come from the brain of the heaven-sent leader who will advance him by leaps and bounds on the long road towards perfectibility. Kant and Fichte had done much, and Hegel was to do still more towards the deification of the State.

### (9) *The Two Hegels*

If there were two Fichtes, assuredly there were two Hegels, and the twofold aspect of their respective careers is not unlike. The son of an official, Hegel (1770-1831) was a Württemberger. Among his fellow students at Tübingen were Schelling and Hölderlin, who admired Athens no less than they admired Geneva in the person of Rousseau. They acclaimed the French Revolution as the triumph of reason, and reason was their tutelary god. In the spring of 1791 Schelling and Hegel with their friends planted a Tree of Liberty in a meadow near the pleasant university town. "For what was true and great in the Revolution," records Hegel's pupil and biographer, Rosenkranz, "he

always retained an almost tender reverence, though the hollowness of mere declamation on liberty and equality soon dawned on him." The Terror, however, permanently altered his attitude to the Revolution. Hegel, complained Börne, wrote against revolutionary ideas on the parchment of a Prussian drum. He had been a student of theology and philosophy, but the stirring events of his generation turned him to history, which was for him essentially political, and he read it in Thucydides, Montesquieu, and Gibbon. He assigned a deeper sense and a richer value to *becoming*, to development, than to what *is*. History taught him that the pedigree of an event has so largely shaped and moulded the event as to be almost as important as the event itself.

He studied the English constitution and that of Switzerland where he lived three years. He championed the Vaudois who had revolted against the rule of the ancient families of Berne. In his defence of them he appealed to history, not to abstractions of thought, and in particular he quoted with approval the revolt of the American colonists. There was a contest between the new Duke Frederick with the old oligarchy of Württemberg. In this contest Hegel participated though his pamphlet was not discovered till 1893 among the manuscripts in the Berlin Library. He urged representative government, the limitation of the ducal power, and the removal of abuses. Nor did he forget the Fatherland whose ideals he boldly enounced. Just as Machiavelli saw Italy the prey of petty despots, so Hegel saw Germany a prey to them. Where the old generation thought in terms of individuals, the new must think in terms of nations. "The last generation," in his judgment, "stood for orderly dominion over one's property, and the enjoyment of one's little world. Now a better life has breathed on our time, an instinct for new conditions; and the new inner world must have a new legal expression." He contrasted his disordered State with the ordered State of France, and he deduced the lesson that a strong State was a vital necessity. He wrote enviously of England and Spain which created States, "and thenceforward enjoyed a period of power, wealth, and ordered prosperity." The French Revolution taught him that order and liberty go hand in hand. "For ten years Europe has fastened its eyes on the terrible wrestling of a people for liberty, and in consequence conceptions have changed and have shed their vagueness. Europe is less sensitive now to the blind cry of freedom. In this bloody drama the cloud of liberty has melted, in embracing which the peoples have fallen into the abyss of misery. The conviction has been deeply implanted that a settled government is necessary for freedom, and that the people must co-operate in laws and the most important concerns. Without a representative body freedom is unthinkable." The individual works for the welfare of the State in and through the share he takes in its control. The development of the individual and that of the State are dependent each on the other. It was a lesson that his study of the English constitution had taught him, a lesson also learnt by Stein the statesman and Niebuhr the historian.

Hegel, like Kant, based his system upon a spiritual idea, though the

two thinkers differed widely in their treatment of that idea. Kant set out from the world of individual consciousness, Hegel from the world of externalised knowledge and of organised institutions. Kant was as determined to analyse an idea as Hegel was to trace its growth in history. In his *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1807), his noble and really great survey of the *Philosophie des Rechts* (1821), and his *Philosophie der Geschichte*, the substance of lectures delivered to the students of Berlin at intervals from the years 1822 to 1831, Hegel unfolded his seminal ideas. No student of them can afford to neglect the circumstance that these were the years of the French Republic, the Empire, the War of Liberation, which stirred Prussia to the core, the Holy Alliance, and the second French Revolution. It was a time when political institutions were thrown into the melting pot with unexampled rapidity, and during it the life of the philosopher is to be measured not by the years he lived, but by the experiences he had undergone. History obtruded itself upon his attention as it never had obtruded itself upon Kant's. If he believed with Kant that there is nothing in the world of man's experience which is not the creation of reason, he also added to this belief that reason is essentially the principle of growth, of evolution. Long before the days of Darwin, Oken and Goethe had applied evolutionary conceptions to biology just as Herder had applied them to the history of human thought. Nevertheless, Hegel's idea of evolution is not ours. "Philosophy is not the only idealist. Nature also (at any rate in the form of life) works out under the guise of fact what the philosophy of the idea brings into full realisation in the region of the spirit," and emphatically it is the region of the spirit that matters. In a word, Hegel seeks to trace the evolution of matter from mind, not of mind from matter. This is the quest to which he devotes his energies. Between mind and matter he holds the balance true just as he holds it true between the conservative and the progressive, the ideal and the historical, elements in the conception of right.

#### (10) *An Historical Survey*

From lofty heights Hegel, as universal as Leibniz, surveys the progress of the world, and he surveys it as one who deems that its final cause is the Spirit's consciousness of its own freedom, though by this freedom he practically means self-consciousness. He defines universal history as the description of the process by which the Spirit of God comes to the consciousness of its own meaning. Such freedom does not in the least mean that the Spirit can choose at any moment to develop in a different way; its actual development is necessary and is inevitably the embodiment of reason. Freedom consists in fully recognising this fact.

Hegel is not content to state his views as it were in vacuo. He seeks for freedom and for development in the pages of history, and of course he finds them. The Bible is not the only book where the seeker finds what he requires. "The truth, of necessity, is freedom." "Freedom, and

freedom alone, is the truth of the life of the Spirit." Nor is development a merely formal process—the development of nothing in particular. "It is the gradual working towards a determinate end. That end is the realisation of the Spirit; and, more precisely, of the Spirit according to its essential principle, the principle of freedom."

History enables the thinker to perceive stages in the evolution of freedom. World history is, he states, progress in the consciousness of liberty. Omitting the prehistoric ages of man, Hegel sees the beginning of his long course of development in the mature civilisation of China. The Spirit, brooding over the universe, moves from nation to nation in order to realise the successive stages of its self-consciousness. Hegel follows its movements from China to India, from India to the kingdoms of Western Asia; then from the Orient to Greece, then to Rome, and finally to the Germanic world. In the East men know only that *one* is free, the political characteristic being despotism; in Greece and Rome they knew that *some* are free, the political forms being aristocracy and democracy; while in the modern world they know that *all* are free, the political form being monarchy. The first period he compares to childhood, the second to youth (Greece) and manhood (Rome), the third to old age, old yet not feeble. In the third he includes the medieval and modern history of Europe, which he characteristically regards as the Germanic world, for "the German spirit is the spirit of the modern world," and obviously this third period is also the ultimate one. Through these periods Hegel, from a height, insists that the final cause of history is slowly yet surely realised through the conflict of the private desires and the public passions of men and nations, which the universal reason, in its craft, employs and sacrifices for its own advantage. Underlying these private desires and these public passions there are universal principles, which are gradually evolved by the very activities of warring desires and intellects. The outcome of this prolonged struggle is the State founded by great men upon particular passions and principles.

The age in which his lot had been cast deeply coloured his thought. As he eagerly longed to resist and defeat liberalism, the principle of which he deemed to be the supremacy of mere self-will, he fell back on the old notion that man exists for the State. With this idea in his mind, he persisted in maintaining that the general will realised in the State is the essential law of reason, that all morality lies in the individual or subjective will surrendering itself to that general or objective will, and that in such self-surrender lies all true freedom. If Kant criticised, Hegel comprehended. Had philosophy any right to pass beyond what was? Was not comprehension its real task? After all, what is rational is real, and what is real is rational. Such an attitude naturally gave unmixed satisfaction to the Prussian Government. For the philosopher supplied them with a vindication of their policy. He taught the supremacy of the will of the State, the precise policy required by the pressing needs of the moment.

The world-spirit, or the spirit of history, according to Hegelian teaching, is not to be found wherever men are, but it is always building

up or breaking down some particular nation which it encounters in its path from east to west. It is ever in some positive definite form, and it is ever moving forward in a single straight line. It is the one subject which produces and passes through in succession the various phases of faith and culture, always shedding its old skin before it assumes a new. It left China for India, India for Persia, and it left the east for the west. Nor has it ever inhabited two places at once or one place twice. Progress has passed by China, leaving its teeming millions for ever on the lowest rungs to which the Spirit raised them in its fleeting visit. Of course that Spirit or Geist finally settled in the German mind. In the world of Germany God has realised His freedom completely in history, and in Hegel's own absolute philosophy God has completely understood His own nature.

### (11) *The Ordered Hierarchy*

There is a strong connection between God and the world process. The individual too has his share in it. His right, as the expression of his individuality, is not a concrete and independent existence, but a factor in this process, a factor of ever-increasing complex determination. The ends of man are finite and often selfish. He is serving his own ambition, his own passion, and yet in so doing he is also taking part for or against progress. The outstanding figures of history are those whose work has been a turning point in the world of affairs, for they have boldly cut themselves away from tradition, setting the current of events towards a new ideal. A Luther or a Napoleon or a Hegel is a man of this rare type. His "moment" is a great one in the world of ideas, and he is free to make the most he can of the tide in the affairs of men he guides in a new direction. Hegel, accordingly, lays stress on the part played by the great individual, and the last charge that can be preferred against him is that of undermining his power of choice or subjecting it to an iron law of fate. The happiness of the great man—and for that matter, the small man—can find no lasting satisfaction in his own happiness: he must seek the universal element vital to morality. The range must be widened and deepened until it includes humanity. So Hegel can pass from abstract morality to the morality of conduct without any breach of continuity. The submission of the individual to duty or duties is the inevitable outcome of his own freedom and personality. Of course there is—there can be—no divorce between politics and morals. There is no sharp cleavage between the individual and the State. A Kant may declare the conscience of man to be a law unto itself, but it was reserved for Hegel to disclose the great truth that conscience owes its character, its form, to the working, conscious and unconscious, of the instinct, the sense, of the community. The State, under these circumstances, fulfils the mission assigned to it by Burke, "a partnership in all science, a partnership in all art, a partnership in every virtue and in all perfection."

Between the individual and the State society intervenes. It is the intermediate factor. Given Hegel's concern with the theory of evolution, the State is an organism. Our philosopher would agree with Dryden

'Tis not the hasty product of a day  
But the well-ripened fruit of wise delay.

Hegel understands that if he sees an analogy between the life of the State and the life of a plant, he must allow for change, be it ever so slow. And this is precisely what he is as unwilling to allow as Burke himself. They are two of the great conservatives of history, and we are not at all sure that Hegel is not the greater conservative of the two. Nevertheless, he admits in almost formal words that the State is an organism. Its essence, from this angle, lies in Burke's view that "Constitutions grow and are not made," a position Hegel carefully considers and rather reluctantly adopts. The French Revolution had gone far towards wrecking the social organism which places the idea of the State in a position negatively secure from the assaults of the individual, and also positively provides the source for all the claims and the aspirations of the life of man. So surveyed, the State is no longer the product of convention and caprice, and it is no longer at their mercy. The State stands out against the consciousness of the people as a great external object, widening and deepening beyond measure their very life.

The family, the guild, the class—all, in an ordered hierarchy—develop society and this society organically becomes the State. Hegel is swayed by the importance of Physiocrats attached to agriculture, but of course the Prussia of his day had no industrial system of importance. The cultivator forms the broad base of the social pyramid. The effort of man to satisfy his needs and acquire wealth begins on the level of selfishness. As it works it changes "into the contribution to the satisfaction of the needs of all others, the mediation of the individual through the universal; thus each, because he acquires and produces and enjoys for himself, produces and acquires for the enjoyment of others." Each class no doubt has its own division from others, but it has its solidarity. Each class has its own private interest, but it has its relationship with the system as a whole. Above the agricultural labourer comes the guild, which is medieval, with no thought of the Industrial Revolution about to sweep it away. Above the artisan comes the middle class, the salaried official. "This class is adapted to a political function of the State by the fact that its property is independent of the property of the State, the uncertainties of trade, and the desire for gain; it is set free from the dominion of its own caprice, because its members have not the right, which other citizens have, to dispose freely of the whole of their property, since this is entailed." The official thus shades off into the Junker.

The hierarchical distribution of classes is based on pre-industrial ideas, and scarcely allows for stages beyond the guild of the artisan. Ricardo's economic man is still invisible. As Hegel envisaged his

political conceptions in their reactions to the French Revolution, so he envisaged his economic conceptions in their reactions to an agricultural condition of affairs. The bourgeoisie was beginning to emerge. The political development of classes bestowed an overwhelming importance on the aristocracy, barely allowing a place for the men of the factory. He is acute enough to understand the economic community with its laws of growth and its independence of outlook. Nevertheless, relatively to land, its independence is slight, and the State contrives to have the economic community "brought back" to adjust itself to the common weal.

### (12) *The Social Pyramid*

Law comes from the State: it may also come from the law of nature and from the groups working within the State. Natural law possesses a vitality of its own—if it helps the State. The groups also possess a vitality of their own—if they help the State. While he accepts from Montesquieu—as did the American Fathers of the Constitution—the division of powers Hegel transforms it by his strong sense of political unity. "The powers of the State," in his considered judgment, "must certainly be distinct; but each must form a totality in itself, and contain in itself other moments. In speaking of the distinct activities of the powers, one must not fall into the inexcusable error of implying that each power must stand by itself in abstraction; the powers must be distinct only as distinct moments in the concept. If the distinctions exist abstractly by themselves, it is obvious that two autonomies cannot form a unity, but must produce a perpetual conflict, resulting either in the destruction of the totality or in the re-establishment of the unity by force. Thus, in the French Revolution, the legislative now devoured the so-called executive and was now devoured by it; the moral claim of harmony between them was reduced to an absurdity." There is, there must be, unity in the State, and the monarch visibly represents this unity. This monarch governs as well as reigns. To the Crown belongs the supreme decision. The government counts in a consultative capacity because of its knowledge of the community, and the class elements count because they are the representatives of civil society. The last element is a factor in the organism which absorbs it. There is no conflict between the classes and the masses, for if there were the State would collapse, and such a collapse must at all costs be averted.

In his conception of the State Hegel seeks to combine the Greek ideal of ethical observance with the deepened sense of conduct which the Reformation introduced. For "The State is the embodiment of concrete freedom. But the nature of concrete freedom is that personal individuality and its special interests have their complete development and the recognition of their rights in themselves in the system of the family and of the economic community, that they also, partly of their own accord, pass over into the interest of the Universal, partly by their own knowledge and will recognise the Universal as their substantial

spirit, and work for it as their own end. The result is that neither has the Universal any validity or completion without particular interest, particular knowledge, particular will; nor do the individuals live only for that particular interest as though they were private persons, but they also will at the same time in and for the Universal, and are in all their activities conscious of this end. The principle of the modern State has this enormous strength and depth, that it lets the principle of subjectivity fulfil itself to the most independent extreme of personal particularity, and yet, at the same time, brings it back into its substantive unity, and thus preserves particularity in the principle of the State.

The idea of the modern State has this peculiarity; that the State is the embodiment of freedom not according to subjective liking, but according to the concept of will, that is in its Universal and divine character. Incomplete States are those in which the idea of the State is still hidden and where particular phases do not come to free independence. In the States of classical antiquity the Universal is indeed to be found, but particularity has not been released and set free that it may be led back to Universality—that is, to the Universal purpose of the whole. The essence of the modern State is that the Universal is bound up with the full freedom of particularity and the welfare of individuals, that the interest of the family and of the economic community must connect itself with the State, but also that the Universality of the State's purpose cannot advance without the specific knowledge and will of the particular, which must maintain its rights. The Universal must be actively furthered, but on the other side subjectivity must be wholly and vitally developed. Only when both elements are there in all their strength can the State be regarded as articulated and truly organised." Within the State there are such groups as the family, the economic community, associations and corporations, and they work within the State, and yet at the same time they work for the State. They all have principles of development of their own, independent lives of their own, subject at all times and in all places to the monarch who is the ruler of the State.

At the top of the social pyramid stands the State. All human institutions share its nature. The supreme duty of the individual is to become a member of this great body. Hegel would agree with Aristotle that logically the State is prior to the individual. Man has his end in the State: the State has its end in itself. It means inequality, for it rests on the hierarchy of classes. The sovereign is neither the legislative nor the people but the State, notably the monarch, whose word is the lively principle of every action, of all reality. As Hegel attributes divine character and universal mission to the State, he seeks to absorb the Church into its all-devouring jaws. Nevertheless, he is in a grave perplexity. As an historian he realises that Christianity refuses to be absorbed by the State. "The State is essentially distinct from religion, because that which it claims has the form of a legal duty, and therefore it is indifferent in what state of mind the duty is performed. The field of religion, on the other hand, is inward; and as the State, if it makes



religious claims, imperils the rights of inwardness, so the Church which acts as a State, and imposes penalties, degenerates into a tyrannical religion. If religion is to have the force of a political reality, all the laws are reduced to a farce, and subjective feeling dictates the law."

(13) *Hegelian Progress*

The claims of Cæsar and the claims of God are in conflict because it is impossible to secure any dichotomy between those claims. Hegel encounters special difficulties because he insists on the ethical character of the State. His State is superior to the Church because of its perfect form. But what will happen if the Church claims to exercise the authority which in the last resort rests on the conscience of a member? Then the State asserts, it must assert, "the right of conscience to its own point of view, its own convictions, and in general the thought of that which ought to prevail as objective truth." In fact, the claim of Cæsar is paramount.

Kant and Humboldt may hold that the protection of property and of the life of the individual is the vital function of the State, but such a body is a police State devoid of the moral content Hegel ascribes to it. "People make a miscalculation," thinks Hegel, "when they consider the State merely as a civil society, and assert that its proper end is merely to guarantee the life and property of individuals; for such a guarantee is not attained by the sacrifice of that which is guaranteed; and this is precisely the sacrifice which the State demands in war." The State is divine and it exhibits its divinity in asking everything, even life itself, from its citizens. It is the incarnation of life and liberty, yet its drastic discipline is vital. In war it demands life and liberty from its subjects, for war possesses wonderful worth. "Its highest significance consists in the fact that by its means ethical well-being is preserved against the encroachment of private interests, as the movement of the wind preserves the sea from the putrefaction to which it would be reduced by a permanent calm, like the condition in which peoples would be reduced by a long and indeed eternal peace." Peace is a dream, and not even a beautiful dream. It is ironical that Hegel glorifies the State and the wars to be waged in its defence mainly because of the bitter memory of the blood-stained anarchy of the French Revolution. As his State represents force, he came to believe that the conflicts on behalf of civilisation, of progress, and of justice find no place in his system. The interest of the State, actual or imaginary, constitutes the sole reason for war. In his sight the individual wanes as the State waxes in strength till it becomes as omnipotent as the Deity. A wit suggested that he mistook the kingdom of Prussia for the kingdom of Heaven. In the last resort Hegel came to deny the rights of the individual when confronted by those of the great Leviathan. This Leviathan possesses a divine mission before which the individual pales into supreme insignificance.

Progress in the past there had been, but progress had at last accomplished its great task, for it had given birth to the Prussian State. A mind like Hegel's, intoxicated with the Absolute, might seem satisfied with the outcome of the long course of evolution, but non-Prussians were not all of this singular opinion. The great world purpose was that the Absolute should realise itself in time, and in this task of realisation, the happiness or the history of the individual did not matter a single jot. The politicians found it easy to put the State in the place of the Absolute, and the former was relentless in its utter want of regard for the worth of the individual. The *Philosophie der Geschichte*, just as much as the *Contrat Social*, all unwittingly left men under the bondage of the State. Nevertheless, Hegel grasped the connection between politics and morality more vigorously than any of his predecessors. He traced the debt of the individual conscience to the instinctive sense of the community, and he insisted on founding the idea of progress on the nature of reason itself. This progress was realised in the State, which gave the individual a participation in all the deepest concerns of humanity. "*Die Welt-Geschichte ist das Welt-Gericht*," was the view of Schiller. The history of the world is the judgment of the world. Hegel adapted it to mean that the history of the world is the supreme court at whose bar each nation stands incessantly to plead for life or death. He himself stands at the bar of this court, and his supreme condemnation is that it is he, more than Kant or even Fichte, who bestowed upon the German that sense of a divine mission of the State which the modern world witnesses with dismay.

## CHAPTER VII

### NIETZSCHE AND THE SUPERMAN

#### (1) *Intellectual Ancestry*

THE Christian religion has attempted to humanise war from the days of the Truce of God of the Middle Ages to the present moment. Of late its restraints have proved powerless, and Germany is in no small measure responsible for this. She made war pay. Her wars against Denmark in 1864, Austria in 1866, and France in 1870-71 emphatically had paid. A century ago Heine grimly surveyed the spirit of war when he anticipated that the German joy of battle would burst the bonds in which Christianity had long confined it. "Then," in his measured words, "the old stone gods will rise from the silent ruins, and rub the dust of a thousand years from their eyes. Thor with his giant hammer will at last spring up and shatter the Gothic cathedrals." Among the men who called the old stone gods to life the place of Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900) stands secure.

There is nothing in his ancestry to indicate the future iconoclast. His father and grandfather had taught theology. His mother was the

daughter and the granddaughter of clergymen. His father stood aloof from modern thought and the agitation of his generation, and embraced traditional theology which had been revealed to the faithful and indicated by sovereigns to their subjects. Frederick William IV of Prussia was his father's patron, and a career lay before him—had it not been for the nervous temperament which beset his path in life. His son was destined to move far away from Lutheran Christianity. In spite of this, his hatred of Roman Catholicism persisted. It is not the philosopher who depreciates this great religion: it is the son of a Lutheran pastor. For hatreds outlive loves.

As he grew older he used to investigate his intellectual ancestry. Once he brackets four pairs of names: Epicurus and Montaigne, Goethe and Spinoza, Plato and Rousseau, Pascal and Schopenhauer. At another time he brackets Zarathustra and Jesus, Moses and Mohammed, Plato and Spinoza, Brutus and Mirabeau. At still another, the names are Heraclitus and Empedocles, Spinoza and Goethe. The most constant names are Spinoza and Goethe, and after them Plato. He does not mention Kant, and it may well be that Kant's democratic, Rousseau-born ethics did not appeal to him, while Plato's aristocratic outlook did appeal. Nietzsche confessed that he almost loved Pascal, who had given him endless ideas.)

Rudyard Kipling once wrote a story of the bachelor who possessed an orang-outang. When the man married the orang-outang became jealous of his wife, and the result was tragedy. The verdict on the animal was, "You haf too much ego in your cosmos." It is, alack! the verdict we must pronounce on the whole life of Nietzsche, even allowing for the strain of insanity in its composition.

When he was writing *Zarathustra* he believed that it was to be a poem that would make the poems of Wagner forgotten; a gospel that would make the Gospel forgotten. "I am he who dictates the values for a thousand years." "To you" he confided in Rohde, "who are *homo litteratus*, I need not hesitate to avow that in my opinion I have with this *Zarathustra* brought the German language to its pitch of perfection."

In 1881 he confided in his sister his conviction that he was the top-most point of moral reflection in Europe. As a psychologist he is one "who has not his like." He ranges himself with Voltaire as another "grand seigneur of the mind." He is "the most formidable man that ever was," though he may become "the most beneficent." In his *Ecce Homo* he announces "No one before me knew the right way, the way upwards; first spring from me hopes, tasks, ways of culture to be prescribed. I am their happy messenger." In Strindberg he confides, "I am powerful enough to break the history of mankind into two parts." His *Transvaluation of Values* is to be a "crashing thunderbolt." He utters a similar confidence to Brandes in 1888, "In two years we shall have the whole-earth in convulsions" as the outcome of his thought.

With women as with men Nietzsche had little desire to become intimate. In 1882 at the house of one of his tutors at Pforta he met a

delightful girl, and for the first time in his life he fell in love. When, however, she left Pforta he calmly returned to his studies. He was to meet other women for whom he felt regard, but he never entertained enough regard to marry any of them. In his judgment women are mentally feeble, given to petty jealousies and grave deceits. That they are decadent is obvious in their susceptibility to the influence of the priest. The Greeks were right when, as they advanced in culture, they transformed the equality of women in Homeric times into their subjection in the great age of Pericles. Woman's whole purpose is child-bearing, and her education should be directed to this aim. In his view "a learned woman must have some physiological disorder." In *Zarathustra* he lays down that "Man shall be trained for war, and women for the recreation of the warrior: all else is folly." On these lines he defends prostitution. His conduct, however, differed from his creed. He liked gifted women like Frau Cosima Wagner and Malwida von Meysenbug, and he liked his family.

His attitude to women appears frequently in his writings. In *Zarathustra* he lays down: "Thou goest to women? Don't forget thy whip." In it he also states: "Man's happiness is: I will. Woman's happiness is: He will."

Nietzsche withdrew from the society of women as he withdrew from the society of men. He was essentially a solitary soul. His companions lived in the world of thought. Yet he should have remembered that a group of friends form the indispensable intermediary between a great mind, finding its sphere, and the mass of the public. These friends need not be of the same mental rank as his own, but they often prove the midwives of the progeny of the brain. It was a lasting disaster to Nietzsche that he refused to possess such friends, for it gave rise to the colossal egotism that disfigures his thought. It also meant in the days to come that men of the Hitler type, who have been influenced by his writings, have shared this egotism.

## (2) *The Fatherland*

In Nietzsche's mind the individual has no independent value of his own. All revolves around the question, Is he worth preserving? If he has the will to power, yes; if he has not, decisively no. (Think of the haphazard fashion in which men marry. There is no preparation for parenthood. In fact, he suggests a consideration of the problem of eugenics. If each generation has its capacities limited by its constitutional inheritance, the more reason for supplying the physical, mental, and moral environments which will make the most of a possibly indifferent seed. Yet were the scientific problems solved, did it become possible to act on Galton's scheme of developing a "gifted race," Nietzsche's aristocracy, by selecting men and women for race and eminent talent, and mating them together, the question arises, how are we to choose

and who is to choose the physical, mental, and moral qualities?) Is it to be Pascal or a pugilist, a St. Francis or a Bismarck? Are we to breed for reverence or for freedom of thought, for the artist or for the artisan, for endurance or for beauty? Galton entertained the happy belief that on the average great men possessed fine physical constitutions. An equally good case might be made out for the correlation of poor health and unusual ability. Darwin, Seeley, and Nietzsche were cases in point. Hobbes, Newton, Bentham, Burke, Constable, Keats, and Dickens were all weakly children. Hume, Byron, Scott, Chatterton Goldsmith, Fanny Burney and Landor were all backward children. Possibly there might be general agreement in selecting a fraction of one per cent. of the population from whose progeny only disaster might be expected, and a half of one per cent. as worthy of encouragement. The practice of eugenics is by no means so easy as its theory.

We are afraid that Nietzsche himself would be an object of meditation on the part of the eugenist. His head, his stomach, and his eyes tormented him. The time came when his sufferings proved so intolerable, that he could no longer think or work. He accepted his sufferings as a purification, and compared his destiny to Leopardi's. Think of his latter days when he had no father, no wife, no friend, no faith, and no God.

If his private life was full of pain, so too was his public. The wars of Bismarck left their mark upon him. The battle of Sadowa inspired him with the pride of a Prussian as well as the pride of a patriot. "For me this is a wholly new and rare enjoyment," he writes as he witnessed the defeat of the Austrians. He thought it a fine and healthy thing that he should cease his philosophical and philosophical thinking and ride behind the guns. As an ascetic he viewed himself at the disposal of the fatherland. (He conceived of his country, like Goethe, as a source of artistic strength and moral grandeur. None the less, the Franco-German war troubled him. Near its outbreak he reflects, "No war; the State would become too strong thereby.") He foresaw the capital importance of Berlin, that despised town of bureaucrats and bankers, of journalists and Jews.)

He loved strength, and he came to believe that the battlefield conferred the strength sorely sought by a sickly man. Thoughts crowded his brain. The iron discipline of the Prussian army suggested ideas on the origin of slavery. Is it necessary to culture? Are the Greeks right in deeming work a disgrace? Is it possible for a man earning his livelihood to become an artist? To these questions he returned no doubtful answer as he declared his disbelief in the "dignity of man" and the "dignity of labour." The conquered belongs to the conqueror, he reflected. His power bestows upon him the first right to the wives, children, and possessions of the conquered. Patriotism also wove its spells around him, and for a time he turned Prussian. Notwithstanding, he did not quite lose his head, for he wrote to his friend Gersdorff, "I fear that we shall have to pay for our marvellous national victories at a price which I, for my part, will never consent. In confidence, I am of opinion that modern Prussia is a power highly dangerous to civilisation."

In the eyes of Nietzsche the army was an admirable school for those he came to regard as the lower orders of society. The recruits learn habits of cleanliness and athletic exercises; they also learn implicit obedience and acquire traditions of honour and loyalty to their colours and their comrades. The German cavalry, that courted annihilation in order to win time for a movement of the infantry at Mars-la-Tour, and the French cuirassiers, who rode time after time to certain death at Reichshoffen and Froeschwiller, in the Franco-German war, afford proof after proof that the service of arms can transmute irresolute impulse into steady and exalted heroism. (In the midst of these stirring events Nietzsche can write:

"Here you have the State, of shameful origin; for the greater part of men, a well of suffering that is never dried, a flame that consumes them in its frequent crises. And yet when it calls, our souls become forgetful of themselves: at its bloody appeal the multitude is urged to courage and uplifted to heroism. Yes, the State is to the blind masses, perhaps, the highest and most worthy of aims; it is, perhaps, the State which, in its formidable hours, stamps upon every face the singular expression of greatness.")

Nietzsche himself came to see war through spectacles no longer *couleur de rose*. After 1871 he noted clear defects in the character of his country. Germany was organising herself in the scientific field with a single eye to what her people call bread-and-butter results, "condemning every individual to a severe helotism," worthy of Sparta if not of Athens. The truth is that "the State and civilisation are antagonistic; Germany has gained as to the former, but lost as to the latter." (The war had been no triumph of "Kultur." It had been a great triumph of military discipline, natural courage, and staunch endurance. "A great victory is a great danger." It is a danger because preparation for war involves the withdrawal, year after year, of the "ablest, strongest, and most industrious men in extraordinary numbers from their proper occupations and callings to be transformed into soldiers." The price to be paid by a nation ranking as a Great Power is that it must "constantly sacrifice a number of its most conspicuous talents upon the Altar of the Fatherland." Naturally the individual can no longer live his own life or call it his own. Nietzsche saw the Germany of Kant, Fichte, and Hegel turning into the Germany of Bismarck and William I. It was a Fatherland which had forgotten the great days of the War of Liberation against Napoleon with poets like Arndt and Korner supporting philosophers like Fichte and Hegel.

The destruction of the Tuileries in 1871, with its objects of beauty, stirred Nietzsche to the depths. Without discipline, without a hierarchy of the classes, "Kultur," he believed, could not subsist. But of course all have not the right to share in beauty: the majority should live humbly, work for their masters, and revere their lovely lives. A people with this graded hierarchy has no need for war. He does not, however, care to analyse the plight of the masses whom he condemns to a position lower than that which the slaves occupied in Athens or Rome. #In *The Wanderer*

he admits that "perhaps a great day is coming when a people distinguished by wars and victories and the highest development of military organisation and intelligence, accustomed too to bring the heaviest sacrifices to these objects, will voluntarily proclaim, 'We break the sword,' and allow its whole military system down to the last foundations to fall into ruins. To disarm *while most capable of arms*, from an elevation of soul—that is the way to real peace, which must always rest on a disposition for peace; while the so-called armed peace, such as we find in all lands now, rests on warlikeness of disposition, which trusts neither itself nor its neighbour, and half from hate, half from fear, refuses to lay its weapons down. Better perish than hate and fear, and *twice perish than make oneself hated and feared*—this must some day be the supreme maxim of every individual society." The triumphant movement of nationalism and the wide extension of the suffrage betokened, in his judgment, the outstanding fear of war.

Nietzsche's sentiments are lofty, though it is difficult to know how long he continued to believe in them. Later in his career, in *Zarathustra* and *The Will to Power*, he claimed that the battlefield is essential to the vigorous life of the nation. He regarded with equanimity—even with approval—the powder-magazine we call Europe, even if the accidental dropping of a lighted match occasioned a universal explosion. "It delays 'peace on earth' and the whole process of character—softening of the democratic herding animal." Nor is this a solitary utterance of *The Will to Power*. In *Zarathustra* he holds, "Ye shall love peace as a means to new wars, and the short peace more than the long," and in another passage of it he also maintains, "Ye say it is the good cause which hallows even war? I say unto you: It is the good war which hallows every cause."

### (3) *Master and Herd Morality*

Fellowship with the men of his generation was denied Nietzsche, and this arose in part from his colossal egotism. Fellowship with the men of the unseen was also denied him, for he fell away from the faith of the Lutheran Church. In philosophy he sought—and for a time he found—an asylum. He read Fichte, Hegel, Schelling, and, above all, Schopenhauer. Nietzsche fell under the strange spell of Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Idea*, and it left a lasting impression upon him, though he broke with the author as he broke with so many people. Can the solitary bear the society of his equals? Must he not seek the society of his intellectual inferiors? For the moment Schopenhauer's stern world appeals to him. No God inhabits it, no Providence guides it. Inflexible laws control it, and its eternal essence is indifference to laws, abhorrence of reason. Blind will lies behind it, and all the phenomena of the world flow from this invariable, infinite Will. The men of the nineteenth century believe in progress. Deluded mortals! for the will ignores men and their brief span of years in the world.

He learns from *The World as Will and Idea* lack of confidence in the intellect, the pain of living, the happiness of a possible world beyond the grave, and a scornful repudiation of a belief in Providence. He entertains the same creed as Shelley voices in his *Hellas*. For Nietzsche's determinism leads him to think that in the course of infinite time the same collocation of atoms must occur again and yet again. The world runs through recurring cycles in which the same phenomena endlessly appear. Every life appears in the precise way it had appeared before. Every experience repeats itself an indefinite number of times. How is progress possible? What can the intellect accomplish? Anti-intellectualism is a phenomena by no means unknown in our generation: it was also known in Nietzsche's.

Thanks to his old professor, he received the offer of a chair of philology at the University of Basle. He had worked at the manuscripts of Theognis of Megara, who was as aristocratic in his outlook as his editor who admired in the Greek the strength of thought, the energy of action, and the endurance of suffering he himself longed to possess. (Theognis lived during the first half of the sixth century B.C.) and he lived before what his commentator regarded as the graces of servitude prevailed, and among these graces he reckoned Greek joy and Greek serenity. In Theognis he discerns a native force, an original sap uncorrupted by Plato and Socrates. Impressed by the way in which Theognis used the words good and bad as synonymous with aristocratic and plebeian, we witness the beginning of the Nietzschean creed of master morality and herd morality. In Megara a succession of individual leaders established a personal dictatorship. Theognis was one of the aristocrats from whom the dictator usually sprang. Nietzsche saw in a man like him a situation where an ignorant democracy tramples by force of numbers on the men of "Kultur.")

(The teaching Nietzsche derived from Theognis he expanded in his *Beyond Good and Evil*. There we learn that the antithesis good and bad means the same as noble and ignoble. The bad or ignoble include the cowardly, the timid, the insignificant, the self-abasing, the flatterer, and, above all, the deceitful.) The good or the noble have a feeling of plenitude and power, the happiness of high endeavour, with a great resourcefulness in retaliation, a strong capacity for friendship, and for a need of enemies to afford an outlet for their envy, hatred and arrogance. The master moralist "helps the unfortunate perhaps, but it is not out of sympathy. The impulse, when it comes at all, rises out of his superabundance of power—his thirst to function. He honours his own power." The sentiment underlying his action is not unlike the spirit behind the statement of Lord Morley in his sketch of *Voltaire*. There he sets down "the general moral that active interest in public affairs is the only safeguard against inhuman egotism, otherwise so nearly inevitable and in any wise so revolting, of men of letters and men of science."

(The spirit in which Nietzsche studies Theognis inspires *The Birth of Tragedy*. In it he appreciates something of the subtlety and the serenity which he believed he discerned in the earlier, ruder centuries before



Plato and Aristotle came on the scene.) He sees in these centuries the fatality of natural forces, tragic sentiment, and brave pessimism. Behind all he discerns a romanticism present in sixth century Greece, in the thirteenth century, and in the music of Wagner. (In the judgment of Nietzsche tragic art declines, and continues to decline till it finds its destroyer in Socrates, who suppressed ancient poetry.) For by his irony he destroyed the naive beliefs which inspired men in primitive times, and the myths by which they supported their virtues. There were two Greeces. The one is the Greece of Æschylus, tragic, if you will, but conquering, for it is intoxicated with its myths and Dionysian chants. The other is the Greece of Socrates, impious, rational, anæmic, and therefore dying. If there were two Greeces, there were two Germanies. One was the Germany of the democrats and savants. The other was also the Germany of the soldiers and poets.

#### (4) *The Aristocrat*

Many of the leading conceptions of Nietzsche come to birth in *Thus spake Zarathustra* (1883). Figure after figure in it testifies to weariness of the world, the disbelief in values, and the enfeeblement of the will. The figures of the priest, the aristocrat with his will to power and his *virtù*, the Superman, with his master-morality set over against the herd morality of *hoi polloi*, and the Christian are all there. It perhaps comes nearer to the essence of the Nietzschean message which is to supersede the Gospel, and in the Europe of 1939 it superseded the Gospel. Priests of course stake a rival claim against that of the aristocrats. The agelong struggle between Church and State is but another aspect of the desire for ascendancy manifested by priest and aristocrat. Of its issue there is but little doubt when we ascertain the nature of the aristocrat.

The aristocrat possesses energy and enterprise in supreme measure. "Every elevation of the type 'man' has hitherto been the work of an aristocratic society, and so it will always be." There is of course truth in this view, yet Nietzsche fails to explain how such heroes of his as Cæsar Borgia, Napoleon and Bismarck employed the aristocratic society in the vast designs they accomplished. His aristocrat tends to blend with his Superman. Nevertheless, Nietzsche points out two reasons for the success of this society. One is that the aristocrat stands at a distance from men, and because he surveys events from above he can measure the possibilities of the situation. The other reason is that the aristocrat is an innovator, who sees when a custom has outlived its day, desires new values for good customs, and ruthlessly exterminates convention. No doubt Christianity stands in the way of such conduct. Swinburne breathes the very spirit of our author when he writes:

Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean; the world has grown  
grey from thy breath.

Nietzsche pours scorn on an aristocracy of intellect. "Intellect," he writes in *The Will to Power*, "alone does not ennoble; on the contrary, something is always needed to ennoble intellect. What, then, is needed? Blood. . . . The only nobility is that of birth and blood." His own solitariness rendered him specially contemptuous of the intellectual nobleman. Darwin, for instance, is an "intellectual plebeian." Nietzsche writes with disdain of the scientists and brackets modern virtue, modern intellect, and modern science as "forms of disease." A man like Darwin discovers facts, and from them he deduces laws which may or may not be permanently true. But how can you compare a scientist with a superman bent on the perfection of mankind and the expansion of its power? A pragmatist before the days of William James, Nietzsche declares for truth—if truth will evolve a finer Superman.

Anti-intellectualism stands out imperatively, and the worst of it is that there is something to be said for the position of Nietzsche who lays down that "so far as there are laws in history, the laws are of no value and the history of no value either." The nineteenth century lived on the idea of law, the sense of continuity, the theory of evolution. And suddenly with the discovery of radium combined with the novel doctrines of Clerk-Maxwell and Lorentz, Monsieur and Madame Curie, Poincaré and Minkowski, Niels Böhr and Einstein, the very principles and foundations of our scientific world crash about our ears. We ask with Henri Poincaré, Are there any principles? Does the earth move at all? Is there any ether? What do we mean exactly by the conservation of energy? Are all mechanical forces merely phases of electro-magnetism? Do laws evolve and change like living things? As well as a living chess-player are there also living chess-pieces? Do laws advance disconcertingly by leaps and bounds or by brusque mutations? Is their simplicity a mask which we set on the complex anarchy of nature? Is science a mere convention, a set of cunningly devised fables? Are the laws of science just the rules of the game? Is there anything of which we can be sure that it will be true in another thousand years?

### (5) *The Order of Castes*

Impatiently Nietzsche turns from science, which is essentially democratic in its ultimate nature, to his beloved aristocracy. He shows that man values the qualities which he himself possesses. At first the powerful people were the warrior chiefs, capable of guiding their tribesmen and thinking about their weal. They dower mankind with aristocratic values.

In *The Antichrist* Nietzsche is not slow to set his ideal in an order of castes akin to Hegel's hierarchical distribution of classes. The first caste includes the intellectuals who represent beauty, happiness, and goodness. Its members are ascetic by instinct as well as by necessity. The second caste includes the muscular who are the soldiers, the judges, the nobles, the King. Its members execute the mandates of the first.

The third caste includes the mediocre who are the artisans, the agriculturists, the artists, and the scientists.)

The aristocrat in the first caste sets store on power of leadership, soundness of vitality, and freedom for the growth of such manly impulses as courage and honour. From these qualities flow the abounding energy and enterprise he displays. Can the Socialist offer such a display? If Nietzsche hates the Socialist, the scientist is a close second. The aristocrat is "the blond beast of prey," and he will suffer no limit to his power offered by the Social Contract, Socialism, or Science. Conscience will not restrain him. For a man should "digest his deeds as he digests his food." Let us therefore ascertain who are the predominant individuals by selective competition, and let us not load the dice against them by pity for the weak and philanthropy for the destitute. In *The Will to Power* its author bids us remember that "deliberately to thwart the laws of selection among species and their natural means of purging their stock of degenerate members—this, up to my time, had been the greatest of all virtues. . . . (One should do honour to the fatality which says to the feeble 'perish.'") Emerson embodies such teaching in *The World-Soul*:

He serveth the servant,  
The brave he loves amain;  
He kills the cripple and the sick,  
And straight begins again;  
For gods delight in gods,  
And thrust the weak aside;  
To him who scorns their charities  
Their arms fly open wide.

The gravest crime against civilisation is sympathy.) The great man must inflict the cruellest suffering without heeding the cries of his victim. In fact, the greatness of the man is to be measured by his capacity for the infliction of suffering. According to Nietzsche, "if your hardness cannot shine forth and cut and crush, how can you hope to *create* with me? All creators are hard. And it must be a great joy to you to mould the face of centuries as if it were wax.

"Joy, to write your name on the will of the centuries as if on brass—harder than brass. That alone which is the hardest is also the noblest.

"This new Table, O my brethren, I write above you: (BECOME HARD.)"

(It is not amiss to note that Hitler described himself as the "hardest man the German people have had for decades and, perhaps, for centuries.") The conception of *noblesse oblige* does not shake the command to hardness either with the Führer or his follower. No doubt this conception was fundamental with Nietzsche, but we must understand it as he understood it. For the obligation which the aristocrat obeys is to his own nature and to his equals—and to none else. Duty to the masses does not exist for him. They are simply material to be exploited: they are beasts of burden. *Zarathustra* insists that "life is always hardest

towards the summit—the cold increases, the responsibility increases.” Accordingly, “I do not advise you to labour but to fight. I do not advise you to compromise and make peace, but to conquer. Let your labour be fighting and your peace victory. . . . War and courage have done more things than charity. Not your pity, but your bravery lifts up those about you. . . . Let your highest thought be: ‘Man is something to be surpassed’ . . . I do not advise you to love your neighbour—the nearest human being. I advise you rather to flee from the nearest and love the furthest human being. (Higher than love of your neighbour is love of the higher man that is to come in the future.’

### (6) *The Will to Power*

The aristocrat belongs to an organism. Its end is not life but power and ever more power. The will to power is the source of moral valuations, and, more important still, it is the source of every act and every impulse. Of course this will to power does not become one’s own power, but will to power for the class to which one belongs. The self is conceived as an individual, but an individual who is a member of the class. This will to power easily passes into the desire for supremacy, and becomes the will to war. This will to war arises not because men seek to overcome others but because they seek their “exploitation.”

The will to power sweeps a man along, but not so much as Nietzsche imagines. Christianity has discharged its task much more efficiently than he could believe, and a sense of duty can control even the will to power. Nevertheless, Nietzsche is firmly of the opinion that the will to power is not an ideal but a fact: the desire to make oneself or one’s class influential is the cardinal motive from which all other motives derive themselves.

We grant that there is an instinct to power, but is it the only instinct? Is there not an instinct of renunciation? Are there not other instincts? Who can believe that the desire to elevate one’s class is the cardinal motive with the majority even of aristocrats? The truth is that Nietzsche offers us the morals of an amoralist. The strong must live as warriors with pride, pleasure, and the love of domination as their three-fold virtues. Their responsibilities are heavy. But who can measure those of a Chatham or a Bismarck, of a Washington or a Franklin D. Roosevelt, of a Cromwell or a Churchill.

The power of man lies in his will, and Nietzsche analyses his will. Where culture has been longest introduced, the disease of the will is most acute, as in France, and where barbarism is most manifest, the will is most healthy, as in Germany, especially Prussia, England, Spain, Corsica, and, above all, Russia. “The strength of will is strongest of all and most astonishing in that immense middle Empire, where Europe joins Asia, in Russia—there the strength of will has long been prevented from manifesting itself, there waits the will, uncertain as to whether it will be affirmative or negative—it waits, menacing, until its explosion.”

Where lies the greatness of man? It is to be found in his alertness and refinement of mind, according to Nietzsche. It is also to be found in his native brutality and cruelty of instinct. In the combination of these opposite qualities lies the true greatness of man. So the Greeks understood virtue: so the Italians understood *virtù*. Cæsar Borgia and Frederick the Great, Bismarck and Napoleon—these are the great men in the eyes of Nietzsche. In the pages of history the men he admires most are destroyers: they are never constructors. "We do not wish to construct prematurely, we do not know if we can construct, whether it may be better to construct nothing." But is not such an attitude hopelessly pessimistic? Do we not far more urgently demand constructors rather than destroyers?

### (7) *The Superman*

In his youth Nietzsche had asked the question, Is the ennobling of man possible? He wanted an affirmative reply, and of course he found it in the Superman who is a destroyer rather than a constructor. The source of his discovery was his break with Wagner. The musician witnessed humanity invigorated by the Eucharistic mystery, which renewed the troubled blood of man by the ever poured out blood of Christ. Nietzsche, however, saw the invigoration of humanity as due to its own essence. The chosen few voluntarily offered themselves and by their sacrifice cleansed and purified the blood of man. *Thus spake Zarathustra* is an answer to Parsifal, an answer that Nietzsche was convinced would commend itself to the elect. The Superman will guide and direct the activity of men. He will assign to them, especially the strong, his chief concerns, the tasks for which they are eminently fitted. The Platonic aristocracy corresponds to his desires, but leaves him in doubt. Can it be established? The quest for such an aristocracy will be difficult.

The aristocrats are to be a consecrated order, not to be bought with shopkeepers' gold. They are the procreators and sowers of the future and all that it means for mankind. Their will shall manifest itself in exploring the farthest sea with all its attendant dangers. The men Nietzsche cried, "Superman is the significance of this earth. Your will shall say: Superman shall be the significance of this earth." To women he cried, "Let a ray of sunshine shine in your love! Let your hope be: 'Would that I might give birth to the Superman!'" *Zarathustra* exclaims, "I teach you the Superman! Man is something that shall be surpassed. What to man is the ape? A joke or a shame. . . . Man is a bridge connecting ape and Superman. . . . The Superman will be the final flower and ultimate expression of the earth. I conjure you to be faithful to the earth . . . to cease looking beyond the stars for your hopes and rewards. You must sacrifice yourself to the earth that one day it may bring forth the Superman." He, however, administers cautions to his hero. He must neither give nor ask quarter, behaving himself ruthlessly.

(The "far-off divine event" to which the world is moving, however slowly, is the evolution of the Superman (Übermensch). Physiologically perfect, he is self-confident, self-assertive. For him pity and passion do not exist. His apparent cruelty to the pauper and the invalid is disguised kindness—if we take a long point of view. According to Emerson, he who lives for the future is apt to seem selfish to him who lives for the present. The Superman lives for the future. He is, then, selfish, cruel, if you will, but cruel only to be kind. *Zarathustra* passionately believes that "higher than love of your neighbour is love to the farthest and future ones.") There is a poignant passage in this book which outlines the gravest hazard of all as arising, not from the lower elements of the race, but from the vacillation born of pitifulness in the higher man himself. The sin of sins is sympathy. The Supermen lend a meaning to every emotion. But we ask, Do they lend such a meaning? What is the object of society? Is it to produce a chosen few, elaborated at the cost of a hecatomb of dull imprisoned lives? Or, is it to assure the greatest possible happiness of the greatest number? Which is the *summum bonum*, liberty or power?

The figures of Cæsar Borgia and Bismarck, of Frederick the Great and Napoleon once more flit before us. (According to Goethe, the man of action is essentially conscienceless,) and these are men of action. Intuition is as magical in its workings as national character, and Nietzsche divines that Napoleon's character stands immeasurably above Florence Nightingale's. Besides, the competition of life maintains the supremacy of the soldier type rather than the philanthropi

### (8) *Christianity Condemned*

According to Nietzsche, the majority, with their herd morality, imposed their view upon mankind that charity and benevolence, mercy and equality, counted seriously. The more the attitude of the majority prevailed, the stronger the disapproval of all that would exalt aristocracy, with its master morality. Notwithstanding, "the more dangerous a quality is to the herd, the more completely it is condemned." Hence arose the conception of evil as marked off from good. For it allowed "the hatred of the mediocre against exceptional natures." This hatred turned the mediocre to envy of those above them and to resentment of their inferior position. In *The Genealogy of Morals* we learn many strange things, and among them it is startling to know that "the revolt of the slaves in morals begins in the very principle of resentment becoming creative and giving birth to values."

Naturally the priest supports the herd, which rests, in Nietzsche's biting phrase, on "the fools, the bungled and the botched." The Church was foolish enough to imagine that such mortals were worthy of consideration. But what will to power do such impotent folk possess? They take away from the privileges of the aristocracy who survive because they are fit. Power granted to working men means the survival

of the unfit. How can any rational person defend such a policy? In truth, the lower classes lie in subjection by their very nature, and owe the upper classes the services they render them. State pressure forces the individual of low ability to recognise responsibility, the social debt he owes to others. (In spite of considerations like these, Nietzsche faces the question, Which powers are winning? those of the aristocracy or those of the herd? He answers in no doubtful terms that the herd is winning. The cult of the mediocre, the denial of the claims of the Supermen, the growing tendency towards equalisation—these powers are all telling in favour of the average men. But they cannot possess the strength, beauty, and racial fitness, and because they cannot possess such qualities, they are gaining the day. In truth, the race is heading as fast as it can to decadence.)

Herd morality appeals to the pauper and the invalid because each, out of class feeling and resentment, wills increasingly consideration for all paupers and invalids. The pauper wills consideration for fellow paupers against the rich. The invalid wills consideration for fellow invalids against the healthy. Lying and deceit, according to Nietzsche, are as much the weapons of the herd as truthfulness and magnanimity are those of the aristocrats. There is no thought for the claims of labour, no feeling for the submerged tenth. No wonder men reckon Nietzsche as the iconoclast who has shattered Christian values and virtues. (Because he has shattered them, he has allowed a place for the dictator type, for the Hitlers, the Stalins, the Mussolinis. For man will never consent to live without an ideal. If one kind fails him, he will erect another. The Russian cannot worship Christ: therefore he worships Lenin.)

Nietzsche's swansong is *The Antichrist*. Here is its attitude: "I condemn Christianity. I bring against it the most terrible of accusations that ever an accuser put into words. It is to me the greatest of all imaginable corruptions. . . . It has made a worthlessness out of every worth, a lie out of every truth, a sin out of everything straightforward, healthy and honest. Let anyone dare to speak to me of its humanitarian blessings! To do away with pain and woe is contrary to its principles. It lives by pain and woe: it has created pain and woe in order to perpetuate itself. . . . It invented 'the equality of souls before God'—that cover for all the rancour of the useless and base. . . . It combats all good red blood, all love and all hope for life, with its anaemic ideal of holiness. It sets up 'the other world' as a negation of every reality. The cross is the rallying sign for a conspiracy against health, beauty, well-being, courage, intellect, benevolence—against life itself."

The Golden Rule of Christianity is the rule of the herd instinct, even when expounded by J. S. Mill. It assumes the equality of men, and that the services each renders the other turn on equivalent exchange. Nietzsche denies both assumptions with all the vehemence at his command. Behold there is a double morality, one for the herd and one for the aristocracy! Behold a slave morality and a master morality! What are the watchwords of the former? Justice and sympathy, humility and obedience, plebeian virtues. What are the watchwords of the

latter? Boldness and ever-increasing boldness and the exploitation of egotism, patrician virtues. The evolutionary beatitude is that of master morality. Blessed are the strong, for they shall prey on the weak.

Christians were racial decadents, placing their hopes in a world to come. In proportion as they were loyal to that world, they were disloyal to this. To Nietzsche the true humility of Christ was timorous abjectness, His obedience a constrained subjection, and His forgiveness a powerlessness to avenge Himself. From Christ, Nietzsche turns to the pity He inculcated. In *The Antichrist* it is obvious that "sympathy stands in direct antithesis to the tonic passions which elevate the energy of human beings and increase their feeling of efficiency and power." It is a depressing influence, involving loss of force, even loss of life. "Consider the case of the Nazarene, whose sympathy for his fellow men brought him, in the end, to the Cross." Sympathy too thwarts the law of evolution, of the survival of the fittest. It is a multiplier of misery, the chief tool in the advancement of decadence.

#### (9) *The Denial of Life*

As Nietzsche sees it, the force menacing the future is a spiritual one. It is the world-renouncing temper of Christianity. Cure this, and all will be well. Replace pity by hardness. The Superman will effect this substitution. It never seems to dawn upon his brain that by his advocacy of aristocracy with its master morality, out of which the Superman is to emerge—the fashion of his emergence still remains indistinct—with the Superman's will to power, will to power to be employed ruthlessly, he is leaving the way open for a Hitler, a Mussolini or a Stalin. In his intense desire to establish the Wunderman the individual is nothing, and means nothing. Personally Nietzsche was kind to sufferers. His system, however, was utterly deaf to the "still, sad music of humanity." He wishes for the increase of pain in order that the decadent may pass away. He wishes for euthanasia in the interests of the healthy not of the sickly, who form a mere encumbrance to the healthy.

Perhaps one might allow pity on the Stoic principle. A master might be kind to his slaves not because of any idea of duty he owed them but because such kindness unfolded his own lofty character. From this angle of approach there is yet another origin of virtue. "When your heart overflows," according to Zarathustra, "broad and full like a river, a blessing and a danger to the lowlanders; there is the source of your virtue." Nietzsche comes to the world of reality: so do we. In the actual world in which we live, will the man who is callous to the race of the present exhibit sympathy for the race of the future? In our experience, pace Nietzsche, he will do nothing of the sort.

Mankind is incurably religious, according to Sabatier. So Nietzsche discovered. There are atheists of religion, and he belongs to this class. "I would like," declares Oscar Wilde in his strangely moving *De Pro-*



*fundis*, "to found an Order for those who cannot believe—the Confraternity of the Faithless, one might call it, where on the altar on which no taper burned, a priest in whose heart peace had no dwelling, might celebrate with unblessed bread, and a chalice empty of wine. And agnosticism should have its ritual no less than faith. It has sown its martyrs, it should reap its saints, and praise God for having hidden himself from man." To such a Confraternity Nietzsche belonged as of right. "Dead are all the gods," he exclaims, "now we will that the Superman live." Let him be the High Priest of the new Temple. If there are any deities worshipped in it, let them be the gods Heine invoked.

With all the acuteness, the vividness, and the poetry with which Nietzsche expounds his dream of the transvaluation of all the accepted values, it remains still a dream, the vision of a poisoned brain. On the negative side he has flung into modern thought some ferments which ought to evoke a not unwholesome disturbance of conventional appreciations. But on the positive and constructive side his conception of the Superman as the goal of humanity is evidently false and narrow. Such a being can never find a place as a permanent element in human society. The ascetic religious, we glean, have sprung into existence in order to furnish an escape, in thought at least, from the raw horrors of life. How does the Superman escape them? He is in no wise exempt from the common lot. Sickness, frustration, anguish, death—all these he must suffer, to these he must somehow reconcile himself. "Carlyle," wrote Moncure Conway to Allingham, "has got a word from Goethe with which he brains every phantom." The word was *Entsagen*, renunciation. But that is "a denial of life," cries Nietzsche, a thing abominable, a weapon of cowards and skulkers. With what club, then, shall the Superman brain his phantoms? The Stoic fortitude of a Marcus Aurelius is not his, nor the Christian faith of a Martin Luther, for both of these are inspired by transcendental beliefs which Nietzsche peremptorily disowns.

The truth is that Nietzsche's club is cut from the very same tree as the ascetic's. He can only create his Superman by a denial of life as trenchant as that of Tolstoy, only that he denies the other half of it. He knows that a world of supermen is a sheer impossibility—there will still be masses of men, "moles and dwarfs," whom Nietzsche relegates to "belief and slavery," and who, he fondly supposes, will stay in their place like a piece of mechanism which repeats the same movements unvaryingly so long as its store of energy endures. How profound is the gulf which separates this conception from the real movement of life; drop the seventeen volumes of Nietzsche into it, and they will disappear without a sound! And the masses of men in whom Nietzsche sees nothing but what is mediocre, timid, slavish, despicable—what can he really have known of them? Fortunately the age which gave us Tolstoy and Nietzsche has given us also an affirmer of the whole of life, and in him the best touchstone and revealer of its halfness. Walt Whitman had never heard of the Superman—if he had one can imagine what he would have thought of that would-be aristocratic but essentially

vulgar conception. Man was good enough for him, as he is for the Christian. But Whitman anticipates all that is human and real in the doctrine of the Superman:

Of Life immense in passion, pulse and power,  
Cheerful, for freest action formed under laws divine,  
The Modern Man I sing.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

I announce myriads of youths, beautiful, gigantic, sweet-blooded.  
I announce a race of splendid and savage old men.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

Allons! with power, liberty, the earth, the elements,  
Health, defiance, gayety, self-esteem, curiosity.

Yes, Whitman proclaimed the true Superman and the Superwoman too—woman, whom Nietzsche (note again the deep vulgarity of this hater of the masses) calls “a beautiful and dangerous cat,” never to be visited without the whip. With Abraham Lincoln’s divine passion for humanity Walt Whitman loved the common people whom he knew as Nietzsche never did, and saw the greatness, actual or potential, in all humanity, however many were “the fools, the bungled and the botched.”

What I assume you shall assume.  
For every atom belonging to me as good as belongs to you:

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

I saw the face of the most smear’d and slobbering idiot they had at  
the asylum,  
And I knew for my consolation what they knew not,  
I knew of the agents that emptied and broke my brother,  
The same wait to clear the rubbish from the fallen tenement,  
And I shall look again in a score or two of ages,  
And I shall meet the real landlord, perfect and unharmed, every  
inch as good as myself.  
The Lord advances and yet advances,  
Always the shadow in the front, always the reach’d hand bringing  
up the laggards.

Whatever Nietzsche may say about the “Essene” or life-denying element in the Gospels, there is one thing certain about the teaching of Christ, that it did something for the common man which had never been attempted before by any religion or philosophy. It took this common man, just as he was, and showed that in his soul are being tried out all the really great issues of the universe. Wealth, intellect,

royalty, even austere morality—these are trifles compared with the experiences that lie within the reach of every artisan and fisherman—nay, of every thief or harlot. Was this a denial of life? Surely not, but the most tremendous affirmation of it that ever was made on earth. Nietzsche's is a paltry thing by comparison. It was a transvaluation of values which invested the commonest human clay with a divinity that it can never lose again. Nietzsche was cursed—this yea-sayer of life—as he himself confesses with the “contempt of man,” and all his thinking is vitiated by this radical disease. He had the true fire in him, but it was not strong enough to consume his own smoke. He saw keenly the insufficiency, the ignobility of viewing life as a universal, comfortable mediocrity, founded on the encouragement of a weak good nature and always playing for safety. But if he rightly scorned these “virtues of the herd,” he need not have confused them with those sweet, common humanities which give beauty and fragrance to the humblest lives, and which are a better presage of the future of the race than the dimly discerned glories of the Superman. Nietzsche was undoubtedly, as one of his German critics has stated, “a great agitator,” but any man or nation that seriously tried to live by his Evangel of Power would discover in time that there was something to be said for the Sermon on the Mount.

### (10) *European Anarchy*

Nietzsche always saw the condition of Europe as anarchical, and towards the close of his life he saw it increasingly so. There was no strong centralised power to control the continent. Let there be such a power, in Germany or elsewhere, but there clearly must be this power—if anarchy is to cease. So Nietzsche thought. The day of the small community is past. The ideal of a United States of Europe as a comity of peoples resting on the principle of live and let live was repugnant to his mind. He detected, however, a “paralysis of will” which he regarded as an ominous feature in the European situation. Neighbouring kingdoms are necessarily hostile because they “have the courage of their desires.” There is no altruism—there can be none—between State and State. The old view of Hobbes was *homo homini lupus*, and with Nietzsche it is still the true view, truer now than when he first enunciated it. For him, as for so many Germans of our generation, a community by its nature is the “will to war, to power, to conquest, and to revenge.” To our philosopher “the time for petty politics is past: the next century will bring the struggle for the dominion of the world, the compulsion of *great politics*.” The spirit that prompted the Austrian coup of 1938 and the Czecho-Slovakian rape of 1939 is indicated.

Nietzsche is essentially an autocrat who exalts the State—provided it is autocratic. Install the Superman in supreme control. The State is then the will to power outside the authority of such a Parliament as exists in the England he despises. Bismarck pursued this policy.

"Not by parliamentary speeches or majority votes will these great problems be settled; they will be solved by blood and iron."

In primitive times the weak are steadily weeded out and the strong become stronger and yet stronger. Such is Nietzschean history. "Hence," he deduces, "the first 'State' made its appearance in the shape of a terrible tyranny, a violent and un pitying machine, which kept grinding away until the primary raw material, the man-ape, was kneaded and fashioned into the alert, efficient man." Is this an unfair description of the last State, the Germany of our generation? In the Germany of Nietzsche the first thing is to be "German," to emphasise "race." All values, all historical facts, are estimated accordingly. "German" becomes an argument, *Deutschland*, *Deutschland über Alles* a principle. The one-time declaration on behalf of the Jews is as forgotten as if it had never been uttered, and the Germans of pure race stand before us as the embodiment of the "moral world-order." There is a natural seriousness, a depth, a capacity for great passion in the German folk. They possess the masculine virtues to a greater degree than any other people in Europe. For Nietzsche the future of German *Kultur* lies with the sons of the Prussian officers. (In 1888 he wrote to his sister, "Our new Kaiser pleases me more and more. . . . He will surely understand will to power as a principle." Well, he tried to understand it from 1914 to 1918, and as the result the world will suffer for untold generations.) The amorality of Nietzsche lent the sanction of his name to the selfishness which marked Germany in the past and still marks her in the present. Frederick the Great anticipated Nietzsche. Adolf Hitler follows him.

Nietzsche lived in an age in which the battle has been more than commonly believed to be to the strong. Materialism, real-politik, business methods, the survival of the fittest—these are the things that apparently rose on the ruins of the optimistic Liberalism of the mid-nineteenth century. Mommsen replaced Niebuhr, Kipling became a kind of national Laureate to a people who possessed Wordsworth and Shelley, the young intellectuals who formerly sat at the feet of J. S. Mill took to sitting at those of Nietzsche. The very men who most hated and scorned the age of "bagmen," and its high priest Macaulay, were still full of one of its worst characteristics, its positive and blustering self-assurance. Not Macaulay himself is fuller of that conviction, which properly belongs to the uneducated, that things are quite plain and statements about them are to be made categorically without doubts, cautions or reservations. The very tongues that most loudly rebuked democracy and materialism did so with the confident violence of a street orator. The new spirit has had its triumphs; we have had realism in literature, mechanism in science, bureaucracy in politics based on competitive examination and managing everybody's business for him; we have seen philosophy reduced to pathology and history to a branch of biology; yet the human spirit has not found contentment and freedom in these bounded horizons and aimless laws. Our age leans unduly to impersonal inevitabilities. But can we reduce history to a graph?

(II) *The Great Man*

~ If the great man cannot be resolved into his environment, there is yet another mode of disposing of him. He is no longer wanted in science or statesmanship. Are not the labours of Laplace and Lagrange, Young and Joule, Faraday and Clerk-Maxwell finished, and only the lesser labour remains to be carried out? Men like C. H. Pearson, in his striking book on *National Life and Character*, assure us that chemistry rests on the atomic theory—by the way, does it?—and that even if future investigation enables us to forecast with absolute precision what the result of combinations hitherto unattempted will be, that discovery will hardly eclipse the merit of Dalton's contribution to science. Whether Darwin or someone else shall have disclosed the great mystery of the generation of life, it is none the less certain, according to Pearson, that all future triumphs will be insignificant by the side of the first luminous hypothesis. Every astronomer knows that there was only one secret of the universe to be discovered, and that when Newton told it to the world the supreme triumph of astronomy was achieved. Yet in our day Einstein has announced his theory of relativity, one of the most far-reaching of conceptions. The work of such Cambridge scholars as Sir J. Larmor, Sir J. J. Thomson, Lord Rutherford, N. Böhr and Henry Moseley promises to revolutionise our whole conception of the atom. We witnessed the release of its power in war in the two bombs that destroyed two Japanese cities, but we have yet to witness this release in peace. We wholly repudiate the idea that the great man of science is simply one who is fortunate enough to be able to utilise the labours of a thousand predecessors. In this department of knowledge, as in all others, the genius is as much in demand as he ever was, and his opportunities are just as limitless.

Of course it is not true to say that the labours of the statesman are finished when a Cavour has unified Italy, when a Bismarck has unified Germany, and when a Lincoln has preserved the unity of the United States. The world is hungering for statesmen of the first rank. The man with instinctive sympathy for the conditions under which his work is done, who knows what he wants and what he does not want, who is aware of the limitations under which his tasks must be executed—such a man is in as keen demand as ever. Instead of him we have, at Peace Conferences, for instance, the man who takes the readiest, the most obvious way to gain his end, who barely stops to consider how he can do his work, from the angle of the future, most acceptably. The difference between the politician and the statesman is obvious. The politician keeps his eye on the ground, like Bunyan's man with the muck-rake, listening to the voice of the mob. The statesman keeps his eyes on the ground and also on the hills, divining, if he can, the future. Such a man possesses Chatham's gift of inspiring others with the confidence he feels himself. He is master because he is entitled to be and because he is fit to be. Like the high-minded man in Aristotle's *Ethics*, he thinks

himself equal to great things, and he is equal to them. No one will persuade us either that the times do not demand such a man or that he will find no scope for his genius when he appears.

The statesman is required: so too is the scientist. Every year has apparently fresh scientific revelations in store for us; and though, in the abstract, it may be true that there are limitations to our achievements, every generation finds an answer to problems which previous ages had declared to be insoluble. Though Newton discovered the law of gravitation, and though he had one of the most colossal brains ever given to a human being, yet there were still secrets in the universe. A hundred years after Newton's time Sir W. Herschel detected the extraordinary fact that the sun was travelling through space and bearing its own planetary system with it towards the constellation Hercules. A hundred years after Herschel's time Einstein discovered the law of relativity which corrects the Newtonian conception in a remarkable fashion. The spectroscope has placed in our hands an instrument by which we can detect the composition of the stars, an idea that might well have seemed incredible to Newton who possessed only a telescope. Our work-a-day world is bounded by the three dimensions of the space in which we live and move. The mathematician, like Weyl or Einstein, has long transcended the space of four or five or  $n$  dimensions. A Sir J. J. Thomson or a Lord Rutherford, engaged on the mass of an electron or the mass of a hydrogen nucleus, piercing the secrets of the smallest entities, brooding over the dance of vortices imagined by a Kelvin, with his magic aid summons elemental forces to reveal the nature of the powers to his scientific gaze. From one aspect we behold the disciplined brain of the man of science. From another we behold the imaginative inspiration of the poet. Newton's transition from a falling apple to a falling moon was, at the outset, a leap of the imagination.

Perhaps the gravest wrong science may inflict upon us is the adaptation of its mysterious powers to use in time of war. It is alack! a prospect far too familiar to us. There is another aspect of it. Some men, like Kaiser and Toller, are afraid of *l'homme machine*. Nor do they recognise, what Alfred Marshall shows, that monotony of toil need not mean, and does not necessarily mean, monotony of existence. Despite the views of a man like Ruskin or Ghandi, the machine saves human toil, and leaves human beings more time to devote to their own pleasure and profit. During working hours, no doubt, the artisan seems to be a mere automaton, but meet him after his working hours, as we meet him, and he is anything but *l'homme machine*. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Richter observed that the tendency of civilisation was to turn men into so many drops of water for the service of a monstrous steam-engine, but at the beginning of the twentieth century this tendency has certainly been checked. Thereby individualism once more received its opportunity.

According to Heine, "See all the gods are flown away, and there sits an old maid all by herself, with leaden hands and sorrowful heart—Necessity." This was true, but is no longer so. We witnessed what

some would have deemed impossible before it happened, the way men in England flocked to the colours during the last war, and this they freely did for a long time. The gods of self-sacrifice and patriotism flew back, and the old maid, Necessity, was left deserted. Among the pleasant portents among ourselves, and conspicuously so in the United States, is the fashion in which wealthy men steadily and increasingly recognise that property has duties as well as rights. On both sides of the Atlantic we see employers exhibit a constantly growing disposition to devote their riches to public objects of importance, and are building improved dwellings, opening pleasure grounds in cities, providing libraries and pictures, music and museums for the masses. Let anyone turn to the days of the Industrial Revolution and witness, say, the horrors of tailoring described in *Alton Locke*, or let him turn to the bluebooks giving a sober account of what was actually taking place in the factories of England, and will he not gladly confess the progress that is evident? The enormous change bears witness to a spirit animated by Christianity, and as far removed from Nietzscheanism as possible. The Master Workman bestows on every workman a transvaluation of values never equalled in the long history of the individual. For him the Evangel of Power has been tried, and found wanting. The Sermon on the Mount remains still to be tried.

## CHAPTER VIII

### \* HITLER AND TOTALITARIANISM<sup>1</sup>

#### (1) *The Rise of Socialism*

EVERY generation of ideas has begun or ended with some movement concerning Nature—an impulse towards, a reaction against, her. From the days of Greek philosophy and before them, from the times of the Fathers and St. Augustine and the conflict between Free-will and Predestination, the pivot has been the same. Mediaevalism, with its chivalrous artifices and monastic ideals—with its effort to order and feudalise men's appetites—told against Nature. She took her revenge in the Renaissance, the heyday of humanists and artists, her *preux chevaliers*, who vindicated her rights. So did Luther and the first reformers. The pendulum, however, oscillated, and the Puritans worked havoc in men's consciousness with a sterner asceticism than the world has ever known. Then came the seventeenth century, the period of the grand style and the pre-eminence of the Roi Soleil in Europe. Nature was drugged into sleep, was counterfeited by etiquette and Le Nôtre, by Lely and Kneller, in their false arcades, with intricate side alleys for intrigue. Rousseau followed—Nature's Peter the Hermit, who preached the Crusade without the Cross, proclaiming the return to Nature's

<sup>1</sup> This chapter describes the position of affairs till the Third Reich crashed in 1945.

bosom. The world took up his doctrine, and the French Revolution was the result; to be succeeded by natural movements everywhere—in the Lake School of English poetry—in the landscape painters of England and France—in the educational systems of Maria Edgeworth and Pestalozzi—no less than in the abolition of slavery, in land reform and in the repeal of the corn laws. Upon these came the second Renaissance, the reign of Science; the investigation of Nature's laws, the arrogance of discovery, the protest of the Oxford Movement, of Pre-Raphaelite visions in the world of art and of Socialism in the world of industry. The cause represented by Socialism is the cause of the poor and needy. Men, according to Spinoza, are so constituted that they pity those in evil case and envy those in good, adding that they are more prone to envy than to pity. The poor and needy are an object of pity which takes different forms. It may be contemptuous or impatient; it may be sympathetic and patient. Different influences, springing from many sources, bear upon society at different times, and determine the magnitude and the direction of particular currents of feeling. Concern for the poor has been the subject of such influences from time to time, and has accordingly varied in strength and form. Christianity, being pre-eminently the religion of suffering, gave it an immense stimulus. The ethical element in Socialism is borrowed from Christianity. Nor has the Church ever given up the cause, though her practice has often been feeble and perverted. Notwithstanding, some of her members feel the truth of what King Oscar of Sweden once said to Barrère, "A young man, my dear Minister, who has not been a Socialist before he is five and twenty shows that he has no heart. But if he continues to be one after five and twenty he shows that he has no head."

It has been the permanent misfortune of mankind that Watt invented the steam engine when he did. It came not long before the twenty-two years' struggle with Napoleon, with the result that the Government could bestow neither time nor thought upon it. The inventors of industry changed the face of England more in the course of a generation than it had been changed in all the generations from the Norman Conquest to the accession of George III in 1760. The French Revolution had raised the question of equality and of emancipation from political oppression. The Industrial Revolution was destined to raise the question of economic oppression. To the old ethical view of poverty as a misfortune, claiming pity and help from society, were added the ideas of oppression and inequity, both claiming redress. The cause of the poor and needy not only received powerful reinforcement from the ideals of equality and equity, which appeal to impulses not less deeply seated in human nature than pity, but under these influences it took a new direction. The aim was no longer the mitigation of an accepted evil, but its abolition by the removal of its social causes. Here we have the double basis of Socialism, which is reflected in the two main tendencies it has ever since exhibited—political and economic. They are often divergent, and sometimes in direct antagonism; but this is due to the inability of men, and especially those of an ardent temperament, to see more than one



thing or one side at a time. The two tendencies are really complementary, and both spring from live roots which ensure their persistent vitality, through all vicissitudes of season and weather.

## (2) *The Uniqueness of Marx*

Karl Marx (1813-83) came into this movement when it had been in full-swing for a generation, and had passed through several phases, in which all the leading ideas had been worked out to the surface and found expression. He was no pioneer; there is no single idea in his entire system which can be said to be wholly his own or truly original. What, then, is the explanation of his unique position in the movement, and the resounding authority of his name? In the first place he appeared as the reviver of a cause which had suffered a temporary eclipse, but was in itself indestructible, a cause immemorially old, yet perennially young. The ground lay fallow, not worked out, but rather fertilised by the previous labour spent upon it—though that seemed spent in vain—and ready to yield its increase to a skilful husbandman. In the second place the season was favourable as well as the ground. It was a time of general revolutionary ferment in Europe; the air was full of movement and men were expecting things to happen. This both stimulated Marx, who came to manhood with it and was caught in its spirit, and also gave him opportunity. At the same time it misled him. With the ardour of youth he expected immediate results and impossible ones, which have not yet occurred, and show no signs of occurring in the form he expected. But the miscalculation belongs to another part of the subject; it does not negative the fact that he entered the field under peculiar conditions, offering an exceptional opportunity for a man of capacity to make his mark. And he made it because he had the capacity. He was a skilful husbandman.

There were two men in Marx, curiously mingled: the philosopher or reflecting man, and the prophet or agitating man. The one appealed to the intellect, the other to emotion; and his influence rests on this double basis. It is hard to say which of the two has contributed more to the reverence in which his name is held by the sect, which has canonised him in both capacities; but the combination is the secret of his fame. The one has impressed the few, who are given to study and theory; the other has attracted the many, who respond to a cry. It is worth while comparing him with Robert Owen, the only other Socialist whose name is equally famous. Two men could hardly be more different. Owen was a real pioneer, but he had little bent for theory or speculation, and never passed beyond the child-like determinism of the *New Moral Order*. Nor had he the revolutionary leanings Marx had. But all his life he laboured at practical schemes, planning and urging to the last, undismayed by repeated failures and always confident of immediate success for the latest project. Marx, whose domineering arrogance was worthy of his native land, treated that sort

of thing, as he treated his predecessors and most of his contemporaries, with supreme contempt. It is remarkable that in the calm and conservative British Museum Marx and Lenin evolved their striking systems. Marx and Engels, who played the Boswell to his Johnson, claimed for themselves the only true light, and ridiculed the previous labours of French and English Socialists as Utopian. Yet their own dream of the immediate violent overthrow of all existing social conditions by the united proletariat of all countries, with abolition of classes and the disappearance of the State, was more thoroughly Utopian than any project of Owen or the Owenites, from whom, by the way, they condescended to borrow all the economic groundwork of their own superior system. This forecast was set out in the Communist Manifesto, issued in 1848, the year of European Revolutions.

The Communist Manifesto reveals Marx the leader of the populace, and the bearer of a cause. There is plenty of argument in it, and indeed it contains all the essential points of his system, but the argument is used to work up to a climax, which is a call to action. In it Marx raised a standard. He was a Mahdi preaching a holy war, a Peter the Hermit preaching a crusade for the recovery of the holy city from the infidels who had impiously taken possession of it. Only the name of that holy city is Wealth, the infidels are the capitalists, and the motives appealed to are somewhat different. To this day the Manifesto is more often quoted than any part of the laboured disquisitions of *Das Kapital*. It is a call to arms, and there is more life in it than in the chilly and incompatible doctrine of *Naturnotwendigkeit*, or inevitable law of development, which is the working principle of "scientific" Socialism of to-day. It has the weight of the cause behind it, the cause not only of the poor, but of the disinherited and oppressed, which is far greater, more real and vital than all the theories and schemes. He brought out strongly the weakness of capitalism *vis-à-vis* humanitarian demands. He brought out no less strongly the impossibility of individualism *à l'outrance*. As a prophet he is important because he gave the working class the sense of a great mission.

If Marx's reputation had depended solely on his theories it would have been very different both in kind and degree, and would not have lasted as it has; for they have not stood the test of time and criticism. But in combination they have had a peculiar effect, out of all proportion to their intrinsic merits. The oracular style and air of profundity in which they are enveloped have thrown a halo around Marx, once established as the leader of a cause, and invested him with an authority bordering on awe in the eyes of those who appreciate the cause and want a leader. *Das Kapital* is little read and less understood. It would be interesting to set an examination paper on it to Socialists who profess familiarity with the text. Its very obscurity, however, has been a great asset. Those who do not like it can always fall back on the Manifesto, and others are positively impressed by it. Experience proves that obscurity and confusion are often taken for merits, and rather enhance than lessen a writer's reputation with readers who are not very well

equipped for judging, and modestly ascribe unintelligibility to their own deficiency or find a sort of æsthetic satisfaction in it.

These qualities in Marx have had no small share in elevating him to a peculiar eminence in aloofness. He has become a sort of Veiled Prophet, invested with a quasi-sacred character; and his word has acquired the authority of a revealed religion. This is not only apparent to outside observers, but admitted by Marxians, who accuse one another of adopting priestly attitudes and apply the very word religion. It is true. Marxism is a religion, and bears the usual signs. It has a creed and a sacred text, which the faithful repeat. These are orthodox, unorthodox, and heterodox schools. There are Pharisees and Sadducees, and subdivisions of them; the strictest sect of the Pharisees may be distinguished from others less strict. There are treatises on the articles of the faith, and there is a modernist criticism. This is not said in ridicule at all. The fact is interesting and perfectly natural. The Marxians have abjured other religions, especially Christianity. Mankind, however, is incurably religious, and when it parts with a creed in one form it speedily restores it in another. At one time the Marxians were openly and bitterly hostile to Christianity for several reasons. It crosses their purpose at several points. It ordains duty and obedience, and accepts and even enjoins poverty and acquiescence in one's lot, whereas they spurn duty and obedience, and want to abolish poverty and look to revolt as the means. It looks to the moral law working in the individual to remove evils and elevate mankind, whereas they hold the existing system or social order wholly responsible, and demand its abolition as the sole means of salvation.

### (3) *Marxian Religion*

The Marxians regard the Church as part of the existing order, and therefore doomed in their eyes. Wilhelm Liebknecht put it concisely at the German Socialist Congress at Halle in 1890: "The Church, whether Catholic or Protestant, is to-day nothing but the prop, the tool of the class-State." He was, however, against any open breach, not out of any regard for religion, but because such action raised opposition in quarters where they could make converts. In short, it was inexpedient, and in spite of many attempts to induce the party to assume a more hostile attitude it has abided by the decision adopted in 1875 to treat religion as a private matter. The German lead has been followed by Marxians generally with the outstanding exception of Russia. Religion is officially treated with a somewhat ostentatious indifference. Nevertheless, they need a faith of some kind themselves. In spite of the lofty superiority to the weaknesses of less enlightened minds which they affect, they are built of the same stuff as other devotees. They are not cynical worldlings or cold-blooded speculators, but enthusiasts. It is to their credit. They pursue an ideal, in the end a lofty ideal, though they seek it by exploiting the most sordid motives, not in themselves, but in others,

and they must have some guide to cling to, some authority to look up to, some faith to hold—in short, a religion. Liebknecht made that very claim on the occasion just mentioned. He was against a resolution declaring active opposition to all churches and religious dogmas, and pledging members to profess irreligion. He pointed out that this would be an infringement of personal liberty, and further reminded them that they had a religion of their own. "Have we not that which forms the strength of religion, faith in the highest ideals?" The parallelism was even closer than he knew. The same temperamental elements have produced similar effects. The apparatus of religion they needed was found in Marx, who took the place of the law and the prophets.

Now there must be something in a body of doctrine which obtains and keeps such a hold upon highly educated and intelligent men as most Socialist leaders, and particularly Marxians, undoubtedly are. It is one of the curious facts about Socialism that though it stands for the struggle of one class (the prolétariat in Marxian phraseology) against another (the bourgeoisie) all its greatest leaders have always belonged to the latter. Marx and Engels were of typical bourgeois origin. Both came of the well-to-do middle-class families; the one was the son of a lawyer, the other of a cotton spinner. Both were highly educated. And as the founders of Marxism, so have been its prominent supporters in all countries. Bebel indeed began life as a wage-earner, but he soon started for himself, and before long became a manufacturing employer. After five-and-twenty years in business he retired and died in very comfortable circumstances. But it is significant that Bebel, who sprang from the proletariat, was never a real Marxian. He was essentially a politician and a parliamentary leader of rare ability, but he had little use for theory, and admits in his autobiography that he could not digest Marx's economics. The working classes in general at this moment are in the same plight; it is the other Marx, if any, who appeals to them, and there are many Socialists, especially in England and the United States, who are not Marxists at all. Even the "free" trade unions of Germany, which came nearest to the faith and had a working alliance with the Socialists, jealously guarded their independence before the advent of Hitler. So it comes about that the champions of the prolétariat in the class war against the bourgeoisie are themselves bourgeois and in the strange position of preaching a class consciousness which they cannot themselves possess. This, however, is where their faith comes in. They are fighting for others, not for selfish ends, and the massive inertia or positive resistance of their clients is a more formidable obstacle than the opposition of the enemy. They cling to Marxism because they find encouragement in it. How far is their faith justified?

#### (4) *The Hegelian Process*

The cardinal virtues of the doctrine in their eyes is its "scientific" character, which lends it logical certainty. The root ideas are that the

evolution of society is an orderly process, progressing by definite stages and governed by definite laws, and that the determining elements in this process are economic. The first idea is derived from Hegel, whose influence was still in full swing when Marx studied philosophy at the university; the second is a particular version, or inversion, of the Hegelian theory suggested by Feuerbach's materialism, to which the youthful Marx became a convert. All the rest is built up on this purely philosophical basis. The Hegelian process—called "dialectic," because it resembles formal logic—postulates three phases of development, namely, affirmation, contradiction, and solution; or thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. That is to say, it consists of two opposites or contradictories, which dissolve into a single proposition; this in turn raises its own contradiction, and the process begins over again. In applying this formula to social evolution Marx found his two contradictories in two classes of society, differentiated by economic conditions and in a stage of antagonism, which is dissolved and the process completed by their union. This constitutes the "economic interpretation of history" and progress by means of the class war. The rest of his theoretical work consists in filling up these formulæ with details derived from an examination of past economic relations and an analysis of the present stage of development, which is "capitalism," tracing its origin and nature and deducing from them its inevitable outcome, which is the resolution of the class war between bourgeoisie and prolétariat by their union into one, brought about by the collapse of capitalism, on which Lord Passfield and his wife lay such stress, and the opening of a new era. A particular feature of the economic analysis is a minute study of the labour theory of value and surplus value to explain the origin and development of capitalism.

From this outline it is easy to understand the impression made by such a combination of first principles and historical facts, presenting an appearance of logical coherence and unassailable certainty. And the impression was deepened by the Darwinian theory of evolution through the struggle for existence. Science became the watchword, intellectual and popular, of the day: and the superficial resemblance between Marx's class struggle and Darwin's biological struggle invested the former with the prestige belonging to the latter. But there was more in it than that. The Hegelian conception of history as a logical consecutive process is an illuminating idea, and Marx's insistence on the economic factor was valid up to a point and valuable. Further, his historical researches into the past development of commerce and industry were a real contribution to the subject. Finally, the labour theory of value and the theory of surplus value both have a recognised place in economics, though Marx did much more to confuse than to elucidate them. The former has a long pedigree, reaching back, through Ricardo, Adam Smith, Locke and Petty to Hobbes; the latter was chiefly set out by William Thompson when Marx was in the nursery. There is, however, much solid material in the Marxian system, and he put it together with great industry and conspicuous ability.

Yet it has not withstood the elements; it has been falsified by the course of events and has crumbled away. The reason is a faulty method of building. Marx began at the wrong end with a ready-made formula. It is the weakness of the philosopher who seeks a master-key to unlock all doors. In the realm of pure thought that does no harm; but when applied to real life and made the basis of a policy it leads to error and failure, because the master-key will not unlock all doors and its inventor is constrained to tamper with the locks in order to make them fit his key. In other words he trims the facts to fit his formula; and that is precisely what Marx did. He selected his evidence, exaggerated some factors and ignored others, used the same terms now in one sense and now in another to suit the argument. Science begins with observation, and Marx never attempted it; he studied documents, not life at first hand. If he had studied workmen, for instance, he would have known better than to say that they "have no country" and have been "stripped of every trace of national character," and that their relations to wife and children "have no longer anything in common with the bourgeois family relations." If he had studied the factories of which he wrote so much he would have discovered the founder, in nine cases out of ten, not in a capitalist, but in an exceptionally capable workman, who had become a capitalist by his own exertions and thrift. If he had studied the business of production he would have discovered that what makes all the difference between failure and success is the conduct of the enterprise, which demands a special faculty, and that the man who possesses it is the real mainspring. If he had studied industry and trade and agriculture, he might have corrected the hasty generalisation that the small man was destined to disappear. He correctly noted the accumulation and concentration of capital, but failed to observe the opposite tendency which has produced a multitude of small capitalists and gone so far that the saying of Sir William Harcourt that "We are all Socialists now" may, with equal truth, be exchanged for "We are all Capitalists now."

If he had not been obsessed by his formula he would have avoided many untenable propositions, such as the interpretation of history by the economic class warfare and the absurd dichotomy of the population into bourgeoisie and prolétariat terms, which in their proper meaning present no true antithesis and which in their distorted Marxian meaning have no equivalent in other languages, because they correspond to no reality. Nevertheless, Marx's name will always remain a landmark. The tide of economic and social development has flowed away from his scientific system and left it derelict. The growth of human knowledge has wrought destruction to the Marxian system: *tempus edax rerum*.

Socialism is as international in outlook as racialism is national. Since the days of the French Revolution nationalism, with racialism masked behind it, is one of the most powerful of all the forces in the twentieth century. Man may be as much an economic individual as Marx pleases, yet he is also a patriotic individual. That patriotism often wears the form of racialism is plainly perceptible in contemporary

history from the hundred per cent American to the German of the purest Nordic strain. The pedigree of racialism is a long one. H. S. Chamberlain borrowed it from Nietzsche who borrowed it from Gobineau who borrowed it from Klemm. This is one strain. Buffon came before Blumenbach who came before Thurnan. This is another strain. Thierry and Guizot, Renan and Taine borrowed it from Montesquieu who borrowed it from Boulainvilliers. This is yet another strain. They all borrowed from Tacitus who, as an embittered foe of what he regarded as the decadent Roman Empire, saw its regeneration in the Germanic race with its physically fine qualities combined with jealousy of its racial purity and admiration of its virtuous and freedom-loving characteristics. In the last resort the Roman historian is the parent of the dogma of Nordic superiority, and among his children are Gobineau and Chamberlain. The sense of the immutability of the race, in which the individual is but a moment, scarcely a separate existence, the love of tradition and hierarchy, the worship of energy, the aristocratic individual, the tendency to decentralise and feudalise—all of them have been passed into the gospel of racialism.

#### (5) *The Gospel of Racialism*

The fathers of racialism in Germany have been a Frenchman and an Englishman, Count Arthur de Gobineau and H. S. Chamberlain. In 1852 Gobineau published his *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*, and its ideas were hotly embraced by Nietzsche's friend, Richard Wagner. His friend, Theodor Schemann, founded the *Gobineauvereinigung* in 1880 for the publication in German of the writings of the Frenchman. In 1899 the Germanised Englishman, H. S. Chamberlain, who married Wagner's daughter, published his *Die Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, which was as emphatic in its admiration of the superior German race as Gobineau in his lyrical moments was, though Chamberlain laid stress on moral qualities rather than upon the physical characteristics of which we have heard so much. Chamberlain not only discovered the foundations of the nineteenth century but also those of the twentieth, for the Nazi adoption of his book has transformed him into a prophet. Chamberlain's two volumes shadow forth his amazing discoveries. For we learn that Dante and Marco Polo, St. Francis and Giotto, Michael Angelo and Francis Bacon—not to mention Shakespeare—Louis XIV and Lavoisier, were Germans.

What Gobineau, Nietzsche and Chamberlain unsystematically set forth is now systematically elaborated by Hans Günther, Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Jena. Race is a natural fact man cannot change. A man is born a Nordic or a Jew, and from the moment of his birth his racial characteristics are unalterably stamped over him. Some races like the Nordic contribute to the growth of society: some like the Jewish cannot contribute. Clearly on this reasoning exclusion is the fate of the Jew. The Aryan stands out as the

superior race and the others are degraded slave races. For the former master morality is the note; for the latter slave morality. Two types are notably inferior—the Jewish-Slav and the Jewish-Negro-French. Granting the truth of this theory, it is singularly unfortunate that occasionally the two inferior types are in a position commanding the Aryan. This is of course intolerable. Inevitably there must be a fight for supremacy between the pan-Germanic and the two inferior types, and as the outcome of this fierce struggle the former will dominate the world. Notwithstanding, it is a constant law of history that a vanquished race assimilates its conquerors. Alexander the Great in Persia became an Asiatic; the descendants of William the Conqueror turned Anglo-Saxons. Perhaps—a horrible prospect for Gunther—the Nordics may fail as completely as the Normans. For racially nothing fails like success.

The share taken by the class myth in the Marxian world outlook is that taken by the race myth in the Nazi cult of nationalism. The writings of Günther lend the precision of details—sorely needed—in his analysis of the Germans as a blend of six races, Nordic, Westic, Dinaric, Ostic, Baltic and Falic. War, emigration, and tuberculosis have reduced the Nordic strain, the most valuable biological element in the nation, to less than eight per cent of the population. Still, just as a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, so if the purity of this strain is preserved, it may in time leaven the whole German people. As Chamberlain made curious discoveries, so does Günther. He thinks that a minority blessed with Nordic blood directed all creative cultural power throughout the ages. From this angle of approach he bids us admire the ancient Egyptians and the ancient Greeks, and, startlingly enough, the modern Japanese. At all costs race hygiene and eugenics must protect the nation from the Jewish “ferment of decomposition,” a phrase, alack! of Mommsen whose influence turned against the Jews as well as against the French.

The writings of Gobineau and Chamberlain have helped to sway the average German against the Jew. That history is a conflict of races is a deduction following from their pen. Is not the white or Aryan race the source of all culture? Is not the negro of inferior breed? Does not the Jew belong to the same class? More particularly, is not the Nordic element by far the most valuable in Germany? Who can set limits to its power? Let Arndt answer that question in his poem on *The Fatherland*<sup>1</sup>:

W<sup>h</sup>ere is the Fatherland?  
 Is Prussia? Is the Swabian land?  
 Or where by vineyards rolls the Rhine?  
 Or where the Marser tends his kine?  
 O no! O no! O no!  
 Who finds this land must further go.

\* \* \* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> Written in 1810.



What is the German's Fatherland?  
 This country thus so good, so grand!  
 Where Tyrolese—where Switzers dwell?—  
 I love these lands and people well.  
     Yet no! O no! O no!  
 A wider land than these, I trow

\*        \*        \*        \*        \*

Then what the German's Fatherland?  
 Ah! tell me where his home doth stand?—  
*Where'er resounds the German tongue,*  
*And lifts itself to God in song.*  
 There, valiant German, mayst thou come,  
 And call the country still thy home.

#### (6) *The Place of the Jew*

The Jews are the proscribed people, disfranchised and debarred from all official appointments. Walter Darré, the Minister of Agriculture, proposed the division of all German women into four classes: only the first, consisting of pure Nordics, would be permitted to marry the new noblemen of the Third Reich; those of the second class might be qualified to marry after a period of probation; third-class women might marry inferior men, but the husbands must be sterilised to prevent procreation; and fourth-class women might neither marry nor have children. Darré of course placed the Jews outside the possibility of marriage with anyone of Nordic strain or indeed any strain except that of their own race.

The Jews are a parasite race, which destroys the racial purity of its victims by prostitution and the syphilis that follows in its train and by intermarriage; deepened and widened in influence by the liberal press, parliamentary democracy, Freemasonry, international finance; and Bolshevism. Through their control of the Labour Movement, the Bourse, and the Socialists the Jews are the criminals who achieved German defeat in the first World War. One Nazi attitude is that the Jew happened to be a convenient whipping-boy whom many disliked because they owed him money. The other Nazi attitude to this race is as rational as witch-burning, head-hunting, voodooism, or any other type of primitive magic and sadism.

To the German the Russian Revolution and his own Revolutions are the work, directly or indirectly, of the Lenins and Litvinovs, the Rosa Luxemburgs and the Wilhelm Liebknechts. When Hitler refers to Communism, he invariably describes it as "Jewish Bolshevism," and he claims that he saved Germany from this fate. Now how many Jews are there in Germany? In 1925 there were 564,379 out of a total population of 62,410,619, and their number was not increasing. Their influence, however, was out of all proportion to their numbers. The

largest and most important newspapers were in their hands. In education they exercised much control, and in university life many medical and philosophical professors came from their ranks. If these Jews were all that the Nazis proclaim, we do well to remember the *obiter dictum* of Edmund Burke that every country receives the Jew it deserves. In *Mein Kampf* Hitler writes that "the black-haired Jew-boy lurks for hours, his face set in a satanic leer, waiting for the blissfully ignorant girl whom he defiles with his blood." Is this the Jew Germany deserves?

The Civil Service Law of 4th April, 1933, debars all Jews from public service, whether in schools or universities, in courts or railways. That is to say, even if duly qualified for a post, a man who was unwise in the choice not only of his wife but also of his grandparents lost the post because of the infiltration of Jewish blood. Among those deprived of their positions were five Nobel prizemen, Albert Einstein, Gustav Hertz and Jakobus Franck, physicists; Otto Meyerhoff, physiologist; and Fritz Haber, chemist, to whose assistance the Germans were deeply indebted for their power of carrying on the first World War so long as they did. Among others who suffered were Emil Lederer, political economist; Kurt Glaser, historian of art; Hans Kelsen, political philosopher; Ernst Cassirer, university professor; Max Liebermann and Karl Hofer, painters; Bruno Walter, Otto Klemperer, Arnold Schonberg, Ernst Toch, Kurt Weill, Artur Schnabel, Carl Flesch and Emmanuel Feuermann, musicians; Fritz Zweig, conductor; Leopold Jessner and Max Reinhardt, the stage directors, whose fame is world-wide; Theodor Wolff and Georg Bernhard, editors; Alfred Doblin, Leon Feuchtwanger, Bruno Franck, Alfred Kerr, Alfred and Robert Neumann, Jakob Wassermann, Franz Werfel, Arnold and Stephan Zweig, writers. Aryans like Thomas Mann, Adolf Busch and Paul Hindemith, who were related by marriage to Jews, also fell under the ban. There were hundreds of scholars who were thus deprived. It has been reserved for our generation to witness persecution on a scale unknown since the sixteenth century. Alfred Rosenberg stands at the back of this persecution. This Russian *émigré* has written *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion and Jewish World Policy*, which revives the tale of the 1905 pamphlet, indicating that the Jews are sedulously seeking world domination. In *The Myth of the Twentieth Century* he lends the weight of his pen to the racial position that the Germans now generally assume. To what depths this position leads is evident in this book of almost seven hundred pages. For he actually argues on behalf of polygamy for the Nordic nobility. Perhaps Nietzsche might approve of such a doctrine, but who else would?

### (7) *The Making of Hitler*

With such a background the inevitability of Adolf Hitler is more obvious. He was born on 20th April, 1889, in the small town of Braunau-am-Inn, near the Bavarian frontier. He was the only son

by a third marriage of a petty Austrian customs official, whose family belonged to the small peasant class. His father desired to make him an official, but the lad refused in his own way, which was to decline to qualify in the school subjects required. Instead he sketched and learnt geography; he read history and he dreamed. If his father were the stern parent, he was the unyielding son. The dislike of his father's attitude was transferred to what his uniform symbolised—the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The Franco-Prussian war was a childish memory. Why had not all Germans fought against the French? Why did the Austrians not take part?

At seventeen he set out for Vienna as a labourer, but he cared as little for physical labour as for the workmen with whom he associated. Like the gentry of pre-war Vienna, he hated Jews and workmen. He also hated Austria, for was it not Slavising the Germans, and the Slavs stood as high in his dislike as the Jews? The workers besought him to join their trades union. When he refused, their treatment opened his eyes to the violence latent in trades unionists. He hated them, and he hated what stood behind them, their labour policy with Marxism lurking in the background. He saw with grossly prejudiced eyes the all-pervasive power of the Jews, in literary filth and in theatrical dirt, in artistic dross and in flagrant immorality. Disgusted by what he witnessed, he migrated to Munich which gave him all that Vienna failed to give him. One day the holy place of Nazidom was to be the Feldherrnhalle in the heart of Munich.

The first World War broke out, and Hitler volunteered to serve with the Bavarian Army. During the conflict he fought in eight and forty battles, leaving the front with the rank of lance-corporal, and winning the Iron Cross and the Military Service Cross. He was wounded in body and probably no less in mind, for we question if any man who served at the 1914-18 front remains quite normal. He emerged from it with a superiority complex. He had accustomed himself to despise the Jews and working men: now he could ascend to the lofty height of despising mankind, for he realised that his soul had soared above his wounds. He returned to a land where mutiny was rank, and he as a patriot stood above the mutineers. Who were they? They were Jews and Marxists, trades unionists and pacifists, internationalists to a man. The stab in the back, which rendered German resistance hopeless, came from folk like these.

Of the mutiny of Munich with the share of Kurt Eisner, a Jewish lawyer, in it; of the short-lived Soviet Republic there in 1919; of its disappearance in death and destruction; of the part he played when the authorities asked him to ascertain the causes of this minor revolution; of his work in the beginnings of the new German Labour Party, and the day he joined it which gave him "the most fateful decision of his life"; of his determination to employ the Press, party funds, and, above all, an all-pervasive organisation; of his discovery that he was an orator of genius; of his singling out as bitter enemies Jews and Marxists; of his catchwords "*Deutschland, erwache!*" (Germany awake), "the common

interest before self" and countless others to a nation once depressed by defeat but now excited by the hope these catchwords stirred up; of his Pan-Germanism in 1920 and his insistence on the equal rights of all Germans in the spirit of Arndt; of his cheery optimism in the darkest days; of the mesmerism of his audience by the spell-binder with the candid confession (suppressed since the twelfth edition) that "the German has not the slightest notion of how a people must be misled if the adherence of the masses be won"; of their misleading by slogans and colours, by design and pageantry; of the Storm Troops of 1921 with their uniforms and their flags—as a symbol maker Hitler is in a class by himself—of the swastika flag and the famous salute he devised; of the corresponding growth of his party by all the attractions he lent it; of the lieutenants like Hermann Göring, Rudolf Hess and Ernst Röhm and the soldiers he attracted, for his movement is essentially a soldiers' movement; of the failure of his Putsch in 1923 and of his spirited defence of it from the dock with its proud declaration, "I wish to be nothing more than the drummer of the Third Reich"; of his sentence of five years' imprisonment of which he actually served less than two years; of the conversion of even the warden of his prison who stated, "Herr Hitler, I also am a National-Socialist"—let the pages of *Mein Kampf* bear record. Half a dozen elections, which were inconclusive, demonstrated that the German people did not possess the art of effective representative government. Politically they were the "asses" Prince von Bülow termed them. The political failure combined with the Economic Crisis of 1929-31, afforded Hitler the eagerly-sought opportunity.

In prison Hitler wrote his autobiography, and it is not the least notable—at any rate in its effects—of what has been written in the seclusion of a cell. The spell it weaves over the Germans is comparable to the spell Napoleon wove over the French by the ideas he bequeathed to them in the book embodying them, written by his nephew, Louis Bonaparte. "Our situation here (in St. Helena) may even have its attractions," he confided in Las Cases, "the universe is looking at us, and we remain the martyrs of an immortal cause. Millions of men weep for us, and glory is in mourning. Adversity was wanting to my career. If I had died on the throne amidst the clouds of my omnipotence, I should have remained a problem to many men. To-day, thanks to my misfortune, they can judge me naked as I am."

#### (8) *The Part taken by Music*

*Mein Kampf* allows us to judge Hitler though not quite so nakedly as Napoleon. Hitler is as solitary as much as ever Gladstone or Woodrow Wilson was. Hans Frank declared, "Hitler is lonely. So is God. Hitler is like God." He lives in a world of his own, far more dreamy than that of Stalin or Mussolini. He is neither the spell-binder of popular imagination nor the victim of a demon who relentlessly urges him to pursue his meteoric course. The light that never was on sea or

land, the consecration and the poet's dream, are his. His own beloved Bavaria has produced such dreamers as King Ludwig, the devotee of Wagner's music just as Hitler is another. Has he not heard *The Meistersingers* over a hundred times? Nietzsche, H. S. Chamberlain and Hitler share this common devotion to music in general and to that of Wagner in particular. So sane an observer as Bishop Creighton thus expressed himself when he had been present at the Wagner Festival at Bayreuth before 1900: "Really Wagner's music is too exciting. . . . Many people have told me that his music always made them feel wicked. I can understand what they mean. . . . It was at Dresden in 1867 that I first got to know his music. At that time Wagner was thought a lunatic; now he is adored, so wags the world. . . . The musical drama is impossible. Music may express feelings, but it cannot carry on action." Wagner may or may not have been a lunatic, Nietzsche was certainly one, yet think of the power they both wield. Music of course expresses feelings, but no one who knows the German of to-day can doubt that music produces action. This aspect of Hitler's character is more significant than many people imagine. For many the poetry and the philosophy of Germany count, the Goethes and the Heines on the one hand and the Fichtes and the Nietzsches on the other, yet it is probable that its music has at least altered its "*Kultur*" as much as any other force, and Wagner not least of all. It is when the musician's heart and head are full of his dreams that he aches for the orchestra to voice them. The Germans are a nation of thinkers and dreamers, and their dreams are at least as important as their thoughts, for the dreams of a philosopher like Nietzsche and of an historian like Treitschke precipitated the war of the past, and precipitated the war of 1939. On the stage stands in gleam of armour the young and tall man, the stainless knight, the son of Parsifal. May he not step down from the stage to real life? So Hitler muses, and on all sides we see the results. Is he not the most powerful individual in Europe since Napoleon I?<sup>1</sup>

### (9) *Pagan Legends*

There have been three Reichs. There was the Reich of the Holy Roman Empire, the Reich which came into being in the Hall of Versailles in 1871 and departed out of being in the selfsame Hall, and the 1933-45 Reich. The philosophy of Kant, Fichte and Hegel have helped in Hitler's creation. The music of Wagner, the superman of Nietzsche, and the race theories of Gobineau and Chamberlain have also assisted: so too have historians like Giesebrecht and Mommsen, von Sybel and Treitschke. The legends of pagan times have been reborn in these diverse ways, and not least by Wagner himself. A hundred years ago Disraeli, in a remarkable passage in his biography of Bentinck, foresaw that the intellectual anarchy to which paganism and atheism led would

<sup>1</sup> If Hitler's body is never found he will render mankind service, for it will be hard to affix the halo of martyrdom around his memory.

bring about "a revival of old national idolatries, modified and mythically dressed up according to the spirit of the age." A hundred years ago the great Romantic poet, Heinrich Heine foresaw the outcome as he witnessed the reactionary, militaristic fanaticism that drove him out of his Fatherland. With searching foresight he prophesied the anti-rationalistic paganism and the war-mad megalomania of the Third Reich. Listen to him:

"The philosopher of Nature will be terrible because he will appear in alliance with the primitive forces of Nature, able to evoke the demoniac energies of old Germanic Pantheism—in doing which there will awaken in him that battle-madness which we find among the ancient Teutonic races who fought neither to kill nor to conquer but for the very love of fighting itself. It is the fairest merit of Christianity that it somewhat mitigated that brutal German *gaudium certaminis* or joy in battle, but it could not destroy it. And should that subduing talisman, the Cross, break, then will come crashing and roaring forth the wild madness of the old champions, the insane Berserker rage, of which the Northern poets say and sing. The old stone gods will arise from long-forgotten ruin and rub the dust of a thousand years from their eyes, and Thor, leaping up to life with his giant hammer, will crush the Gothic cathedrals! But when these days shall come and ye hear the stamping and ring of arms, guard ye well, ye neighbours' children, ye French, and put not forth your hands into what we are doing in Germany, for verily evil will come upon you for that. Beware lest ye blow the fire, and take good care that ye do not quench it; ye can in so doing all too easily burn your fingers. . . . There will be played in Germany a drama compared with which the French Revolution will be only an innocent idyll. . . .

Ye have more to fear from Germany set free than from all the Holy Alliance with all the Croats and Cossacks."

Like so many folk inspired by racialism and by the past, like so many gifted musicians, Hitler is a fanatic, and an honest fanatic at that. Men used to say of Gladstone's conscience that it could persuade most men of most things, and himself of anything. Hitler possesses a conscience of the same self-deluding type. He sways the crowd partly by his eloquence, but there are other eloquent men in Germany. He sways it partly by his honesty, but there are other honest men in Germany. He also sways it by his wonderful power of dreaming, setting ideals before the stolid audience which he compels to frenzy as he speaks. He commands emotion in himself as well as in others. "We can always get Adolf to weep," is the cynical comment of Göring. "Crucify me if I fail you"—this is a cry that makes a never-failing appeal, for he would cheerfully be crucified for the sake of the Fatherland. The spirit of Arndt is incarnate in him. He pleads, he cajoles, he exhorts, he denounces, all with the most passionate oratory. He understands the average man because he himself is the average man incarnate. He is the average man raised to the nth power of efficiency, but dowered with terrible efficiency and no less terrible eloquence.

For the musician anxious to enjoy his art to the full asceticism is requisite, and accordingly Hitler is ascetic. Asceticism, chastity, sobriety—these are his qualities. Wine, women and meat he avoids, though here may be physical reasons like gall-bladder trouble for his abstinence. A bachelor, he shuns women like the plague almost to the very end of his meteoric career. The sausage-loving, the beer-swilling German is not in the least ascetic, and for that very reason the asceticism of Der Führer appeals to him all the more strongly. Hitler's self-imposed and physically-imposed self-denial turns him against the flesh-pots which he symbolises by Jews and Marxian "materialists." Just as a German likes to look up, he also likes to look down, to indulge in his superiority complex at the expense of those he deems to possess an inferiority one. A reason for Hitler's dislike of the Jews arises from this cause. It is, alack! a wider taste than we sometimes believe. The outcasts of India, the negroes of the United States, the men who inherit the colour-bar—all in the last resort suffer from this cause.

There is a lack of personal contacts in Hitler as conspicuous as it was in Woodrow Wilson. At Berchtesgaden he leads a lonely life, partly perhaps because he can live there in a dream world all his own where he is not disturbed by the anxieties and perplexities that confront his associates in government. Like many musicians he does not read books. In fact, he reads nothing but the official papers he is doomed to peruse. In his room there are no less than four pictures of Frederick the Great, one of them on his desk. Not far from a huge portrait of Bismarck there is a vividly coloured painting of Bavarian infantry crossing a stream under fire in Flanders, a battle in which he himself fought. There is a bust of Mussolini, now relegated to a corner. In the photograph prepared in the Nietzsche Archives we see Hitler standing reverently beneath the bust of the author of the writings analysing the virtues of the Superman.

#### (10) *The Churches*

The sufferings of Germany during and after the War, the injustices of the Treaty of Versailles, and the dominance of the Allies were obvious to all. In addition, Hitler ingeniously insisted on the wickedness of the Jews and the treachery of the Marxists by their stab in the back of the army. The combination of these causes, annexed to their political incapacity, rendered the Germans an easy prey to the wiles of Hitler and his party. From these general statements it was easy to come to particulars when their leader eloquently described the starvation and the blockade; the loss of colonies and the "10,000,000 Germans torn from the living body of the Reich"; inflation and collapse; the "dictate of Versailles" and "the tyranny of the Young Plan"; the reparations and the fear that Bolshevism might triumph—all these causes worked as powerfully for Hitler as financial and industrial interests worked for him and Mussolini. Practically the World Economic Crisis of 1929-31 devastated Germany, plunging the country into the depths of despair.

No less than six million men were out of work. They realised the hopelessness of their plight, and this very hopelessness played more than anything else into Hitler's hands. In Germany there were the extremes of wealth and poverty alongside. Such extremes provoked the slave revolts of the ancient world, the Peasant War of Germany in the early sixteenth century, the Jacobin phase of the French Revolution, the revolutions of 1848, and the revolution of our own generation.

The Fatherland must be secure: so too must the worker. Nationalism and Socialism furnished the specifics for the prevailing misery. Nationalism was not enough, for it must be socially minded. Socialism was not enough, for it must be purged of its internationalism, pacifism, and Marxism. The combination of Nationalism with Socialism was a work of genius for which Hitler deserves ample credit. Nor must we ignore his magnetism for men of the stamp of Göring and Goebbels, Hess and Frick, Röhm and Rosenberg. Between his lieutenants there is seldom harmony, and Der Führer builds part of his power upon a delicate balancing of their conflicting ambitions and animosities. *Divide et impera* is the motto pursued with signal success. It enables Hitler to consummate those periodic purges of which he is so fond. Frederick the Great, Nietzsche, Mussolini—all can, in diverse fashions, teach this most indispensable of all lessons to the Dictator.

Political parties have gone down like so many ninepins before the ways and works of Nazidom. The Churches, Lutheran and Roman Catholic, have made an infinitely better stand against the Totalitarian State than the political parties. The German Church is as absolutist and wide in its pretensions as the State. The pity is that the Germans, like most modern people, are patriots before they are Christians. Yet while we cannot describe the Third Reich as a Christian State, many of its citizens, however loyal to Hitler, still regard themselves as Christians and have successfully resisted the utter destruction of the body to which they belong. Diverse loyalties impair the powers of the Totalitarian State in Germany or Russia or Italy.

It is not in the power of the Almighty to alter the past: it is in the power of the historian to do so. He can omit inconvenient facts; he can lay stress on convenient ones; and, above all, the interpretation of the facts remain at his disposal. One German historian, still alive and whose name we therefore cannot give, practised the art of omission of some facts, undue emphasis on others, and bestowed the Nazi interpretation on all of them. When taxed to account for his changed attitude, he replied with a shrug, "I must live." Historians and economists pay homage to Hitler through their writings. The theologians and the Church behind them have been unwilling to follow their example. They put the claims of God at least as high as those of Der Führer. The Church, whether Reformed or Roman Catholic, refused to be dragooned. Bismarck engaged in the *Kulturkampf* with the Roman Catholic communion, and in spite of his protestation that he would never go to Canossa, to Canossa he went, for this communion defeated him. If the Pope cowed Bismarck, it has been the fate of the Church



to cow Hitler. For Bismarck used to say that the difficulty in politics is to realise when one had come to the street called Stop. It has been the good fortune of the Church to assist in bringing Hitler to this street. For we do not believe in a permanent victory of the Swastika over the Cross. Nazidom is as religious—or as irreligious—as Bolshevism. It affects the Church as well as the State. Is it not possible to replace Catholic Christianity by German Christianity? Should not German Christianity combine with National-Socialism? Is not such a movement in the true line of succession from Luther and the German spirit he infused into his race? Is not such a Church bound to include all Aryans and exclude all non-Aryans? Surely its members would receive a racial faith in Christ which descended from Luther and the heroic piety characterising him. Is not Hitler the representative of that racial faith?

Such are the doctrines which Churches have been forced to hear, and to hear in silence, for the penalty of speech is the concentration camp—and worse. Niemöller and Bishop Wurm, Cardinal Faulhaber and Bishop von Preysing, have broken this silence: so too have seven thousand pastors. These pastors know full well that Luther conferred on the Prince the powers of *Summus Episcopus* in his own land. Under the Prince came the General Superintendents. Reichbishop Müller superseded these Superintendents, transforming himself into a Lutheran Pope. His position, however, stood in complete contrast with the Lutheran conception of the congregation as the supreme power. The pastor of this congregation was its minister, not its master. The priesthood of the laity is the dominant idea. With such an idea in their minds, the three bodies, the Lutheran, the largest, the Calvinist or Reformed, and the United, a combination of Lutherans and Calvinists, revolted against the papacy of Müller. The Reformed communion had rejected the authority of bishops in the spirit of Calvinism that saw in the congregation the supreme authority. Accordingly they offered stout opposition to the Reichsbishop, and were scandalised by his attempt to Nazify the Church. They were dismayed by the stipulation of Nordic blood as a basis of membership of the Church, for racial honour, in the spirit of Nietzsche, excluded the Christian love of one's neighbour as degrading weakness and as sheer humanitarianism. They stood for the Catholic character of Christianity and they stood against the heathen materialism of the "Blood and Soil" theory. The Church, in fact, could not adjust its eternal message to temporal philosophy and political convictions. Nor could it accept a leader furnished with external authority. The Church—not the State—must determine its own life. Cæsar must learn his due place. Yet one Nazi Bible was Hitler's *Mein Kampf*: another was Rosenberg's *Myth of the Twentieth Century*, with its teaching of race as the supreme factor in civilisation, the abandonment of the Old Testament and the virtual abandonment of the New by the eclipse of the Paulinism taught by "the rabbi Paul," by the rejection of "the frightful crucifix" and the rejection of the belief in "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

The Confessional Church energetically objected to the new oath on

the ground that it mixed the affairs of Cæsar with those of God. To confound the spiritual duty of the pastor with his civic was un-Lutheran. Besides, if the pastor refused the oath he seemed as disloyal as the Christian who refused to burn incense before the image of the Roman Emperor. Was it fair to place him in this invidious position? The pastor was willing to take the oath of loyalty to the State as a citizen. More than that, if he respected his conscience, he dare not do. One State, one Nation, one Church, was a creed conflicting with his inmost belief. The increasing infallibility of Der Führer secretly alarmed the faithful. Was not Hitler becoming a High Priest, representing the people before God? Was he not fast becoming a mediator between God and His people?

The freedom of a Christian man means as much to Martin Niemöller as to Martin Luther. In the eternal struggle between the liberty of the individual and the power of the State, the pastor and the peasant are taking their share. Persecution has revitalised the faith of many a Christian who was lukewarm before 1933. Cardinal Faulhaber and Bishop von Preysing anxiously realise that Roman Catholics and Protestants are fighting the same battle, and they openly pray for and sympathise with their persecuted Lutheran brethren. It will be one of the strangest of all the episodes of history if the ultimate unity of the Christian Churches springs from the desire of the individual to secure his liberty of conscience, be the cost what it may.

### (II) *German Retardation*

The year 1946 witnesses England and the United States in a similar stage of political development. Perhaps England is more fortunate than the United States for at home—though not abroad—she has no colour problem to face. The vertical strata of development in both countries is fairly synchronous all through. The Thirty Years' War (1618-48) retarded the Germans politically by centuries, and their place in history may well be that which England or the United States occupied on 4th July, 1776. Burke used to insist on the share taken by tradition in the building of a society. This tradition has been broken in Germany by countless wars, and not least by the Thirty Years' War which wrought, almost as much havoc as that created by the divisive ideals of the Holy Roman Empire. At the end of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1 Germany attained a stage of development reached by England in the thirteenth century, by France at the end of the fifteenth, by Spain early in the sixteenth. As ordinary tradition has failed to hold them together, they require an extraordinary one. Wars had divided them. Why should not wars unite them? Under Bismarck three wars possessed this unifying force. Once he fell from power in 1890 he ceased to guide the State. The young William II assumed his place. He delivered vain-glorious speeches which issued in the last World War, and their glory proved unsubstantial. Hitler utters every whit as vain-glorious speeches,

and they result in solid facts till he lost the Battle of Britain during the summer of 1940. One is tempted to lay stress on his luck, which explains something, but not everything. Abraham Lincoln used to say that you could fool some of the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but that you could not fool all the people all the time. Hitler did not in the issue fool all the Germans all the time. There is a sense of mystery in one of the most amazing careers of all time. No one has fully penetrated the secret of his meteoric rise to position. His opponents maintain that Nazi atrocities cannot be believed because they are unbelievable; and exactly the same remark applies to Hitler's own astounding career.

Talleyrand used to state that the French are wiser than the wisest man in France. It is a point of view that makes no appeal to Hitler, for he is the wisest man in Germany, wiser than all the Germans. It might be supposed that so strong a proof of individuality might recognise the worth of the individual, but this is the very last thing he can afford to do. Hitler will contend that there used to be freedom for the individual in the old Germany, but it was freedom to starve, freedom for Jewish agitators to disrupt German unity, freedom to be exploited by Marxian materialists. The Storm Troopers sing, "We spit on freedom, the Folk must be free." The inequality of men, the subordination of individual freedom to national "freedom," the unlimited power of Der Führer over the nation, his unlimited responsibility to God and the people—this is the new liberty. At the same time exist private property, individual initiative in business, the profit system, and inequality of wealth and income. The economic parallel of democracy is Communism of the Russian variety. The political parallel of capitalism is dictatorship and oligarchy. Away with Parliament and Congress, which are dangerous anachronisms! Here Hitler has retrograded to the absolutist European kings of the seventeenth, or even the sixteenth, century. *Mein Kampf* teems with bitter denunciations of the liberalism of the Hohenzollern Empire, which certainly was not conspicuous, and with bitter denunciations of democracy or the majority rule in all its forms. Alexander I gladly allowed every one to be free if only all the world would use its freedom solely to do his will, and Hitler allows freedom on precisely the same terms. In his view, the principle of the party structure he allows is identical with the principle upon which the old Prussian army was organised: authority from the top downwards, responsibility from the bottom upwards. Does a nation obtain more than one of her demands at a time? On the overthrow of the Directory in 1799 France required order and liberty. She only won order. On the overthrow of France in 1871 Germany required unity and liberty. She only won unity. On the overthrow of the Hindenburg regime she required liberty as well as order. She only won order.

The arguments of Der Führer possess the merit of simplicity, or is it a merit when, as Burke used to insist, the State is so complex? Are not men unequally endowed? Is not therefore the participation of the masses in government and legislation through numerical majorities

absurd and contrary to natural law? Is not the Superman vastly more important? Is not the role of personal leadership vital in business, and even more vital in the State? Surely the conclusion is plain. The people are answerable to the Dictator. The Dictator is answerable to God. The unthinking may ask yet another question, Has the Dictator any relationship with them, and, if so, of what nature? To this question Nazi theory and practice supply no answer. We simply learn from Göring that Hitler is another infallible Pope. The tragedy is that the Roman Pope, so far, refuses to issue infallible decrees, and Hitler issues so many of them that we are staggered—and bewildered—by their number. What check is there on this infallibility? We know of none.

### (12) *The Enforced Unity*

The Superman of Nietzsche, the military hero-worship of Treitschke, and the racialism of Gobineau and Chamberlain all united in preparing the way for the man who at last arrived. National unity, complete equality with other countries, and, above all, general prosperity were promised by Hitler. In nine years he has achieved these three aims. He purged his party in 1934 and his generals in 1938, removing all who had expressed any individual opinion.

The Tannhäuser and the Parsifals had to come into the party system, and the spirits from the vasty deep had to be controlled. Hitler created a party press under his aegis, and suppressed the newspapers under Jewish influence. Naturally the ex-Lance-Corporal found in the army his model for party organisation. He visualised unlimited power at the top of the party organisation, power to doom men, if need be, to death; unquestioning obedience, at the bottom, with joy in sacrifice and subservience. Hitler held all the power and received all the obedience. He fought the mass organisations of other parties with the mass organisation of his own till he reduced them to nullity. He broke their terror with his terror. Iron discipline on the part of the rank and file, combined with complete responsibility on the part of all their leaders, bestowed upon Hitler a power which Constantine the Great might envy. In Hitler's words, "the movement represents, in small things as in large, the fundamental principle of German democracy: the election of the leader, but unlimited authority in his hands." In a party pyramid he arranged matters. He first named the members of the Reichstag and appointed the *Gauleiters*. They appointed the *Kreisleiters* who in turn appointed the *Ortsgruppenleiters*. Those at the base of this political pyramid possessed no voice in this succession of leaders in the ascending scale, and at its top stood Hitler himself. It was the house that Jack built, though built in a reverse order. There was consultation in form—it is more important to observe forms than what the forms mean: there was none in substance. Herder once described Germany as the land of obedience. Hitler realises the truth of

this description as it has never been realised before. Discipline and obedience pervade life. "If he has nothing to command," writes Herr Stapel with perfect truth and delightfully unconscious humour, "the Prussian orders his dog about."

Kant, Fichte and Hegel in one way; Nietzsche in another; Wagner in another; Mommsen and Treitschke in yet another; and Gobineau and Chamberlain in still another—all have stamped themselves upon the German of our generation. The habits of blind obedience, the goose-stepping, the drill sergeant, the worship of the State, the sentimentalism that easily degenerates into cruelty—all have helped the absorption of all parties into one, the Nazi. This party can find room for job-seekers, and one reason for the animosity against the Jews is that every one of them displaced can be replaced by a man of Nordic blood. The National Socialist Workers' Union came regularly into being on 30th June, 1926, and it is not so much the most powerful party in Germany as practically the only one. All "heresies" in its ranks, that is, all independence of judgment, are ruthlessly exterminated, and we betide the heretics! Its members have their thinking done for them whereby unanimity of outlook is maintained. The Social Democrats, the Centre Party, any party and every party, have all gone down before the all-powerful N.S.D.A.P., as the National Socialist Workers' Union is commonly called. It is appalling to think that in Germany there is only one organisation while in other parts of the world, as in England or the United States, collectivism and individual enterprise cover the field of industry between them. It does not much matter whether the former gain here and there from the latter when reason and experience justify it. As long as there is an alternative circle, the tyranny of Socialism or of Nazidom will be impossible. "Liberty depends on the division of power," was the constant cry of Lord Acton. What we should resist to the death is an attempt to make any circle cover the whole ground. For it is not only the death of individualism: it is also the death of the thought of great men. The Germans are the slave of the machine, which ever grows more complex. As it grows more complex, the danger is that it may collapse through its own weight.

There are periodic purges among the machine-workers, for Hitler fervently believes that these purges sustain, and even increase, the morale of the survivors. "The Black Hundred" inquire as carefully into the faith of a worker as ever did the Inquisition of old, and the methods of the two institutions are not unlike. The "Gestapo," or Secret State Police, is a set of spies in the service of the Government. At Munich we discover the much-dreaded *Uschla*, a Secret Service Department with records unique in the world. It investigates complaints against party members, settles disputes, and recommends the expulsion of disloyal comrades. Now the N.S.D.A.P. reposes on the basis of comradeship, and it is disconcerting to meet with "The Black Hundred," the "Gestapo" and "The *Uschla*" who are obliged to see that the spirit of fraternity flourishes. Checks and counter-checks are odd manifestations of the spirit of the N.S.D.A.P. Is honour rooted in dishonour?

Is faith rooted in fear? Does loyalty rest on the suppression of disloyalty?

"The Black Hundred," the "Gestapo," and the "Ussla" are all meant to weld the party together in one body from which all dissentients are removed. Absolute unity is the watchword with the result that Germany speaks with one voice over one land. In Bismarck's day the whole of Germany was a confederation in which the provinces still possessed privileges. The head of this confederation was the German Emperor, not the Emperor of Germany because of the existence of the provinces. What Bismarck dare not accomplish, Hitler has accomplished. For he has welded the whole of Germany into one vast unitary State. Prussia, Bavaria, Wurttemberg, Saxony, Hesse, Baden and all the provinces have been swallowed up by the jaw of the Leviathan. The magic word was *Gleichshaltung* or co-ordination. It meant of course the disappearance of local self-government which had formed an admirable school of citizenship. On 1st February, 1934, Bismarck's Germany with its provinces disappeared. By a short law all representatives in the States transferred the sovereign rights of the States to the Central Government, and subordinated the State governments and the *Statthalters* or Regents to the Reich Government. With all the form of law a federal democracy became transformed into a centralised autocracy. Plebiscites had naturally confirmed the policy of centralisation. What amazes one so much in this unitary Germany is the ease with which the States submitted to the central power, for they had customs and traditions all their own. In all of them is the N.S.D.A.P., which constitutes the foundation of all public policy. In its efforts to stimulate the spirit behind the State its progress is gradual. Hitler measured the duration of his Reich by the mystical number of a thousand years, though he predicted that the complete conversion of the State to Nazi principles would take at least a century. George Eliot used to say that of all forms of mistake prophecy was the most gratuitous. A century is a long period and much will take place in it which no one—not even Hitler—can foresee. He certainly failed to secure his century.

### (13) *Explicit and Implicit Force*

Behind all change there lies force, explicit or implicit. If the change is in accordance with the wishes of the people concerned, force is implicit; if without their wishes, it is explicit. The use of terror and brutality is intended to safeguard the State in moments of danger. The exiled noblesse of France devised a foreign invasion of their country in order to overthrow the revolutionary regime, and the outcome was the Reign of Terror. The bourgeoisie of Paris in 1871 witnessed a terrible civil war, and the execution of the communists testified to their rage. In Russia the assassination of Uritsky and Volodarsky, combined with the foreign invasion and domestic insurrection, produced the "Red Terror," graver far than the French "Reign of Terror." The Russian ruling classes

tried to punish their expropriators in the "White Terror." The temporarily successful Bolshevik revolution in Hungary stimulated the men Horthy commanded to wreak their vengeance on Jews, Socialists and Communists. No open dangers of these dimensions threatened Germany externally or internally. The opponents of the Nazis never lifted a finger against them. No strikes, no street fighting, no barricades, no rebellions, no assassinations of officials, no foreign invasion—nothing in fact threatened the Nazi party. Nevertheless, there was a reign of terror. The parallel between the Nazis and the Fascists is easy to draw, and certainly one resemblance is the murders that characterise both systems. The beatings and the murders of the Marxists in Italy in 1922-5 find their like in the Germany of our generation.

"Nothing is more surprising in the annals of warfare than the fact that the greatest army put together in Europe barely failed to achieve an astounding success at the first battle of the Marne in 1914. Humanly speaking, it ought to have smashed the French and British armies, and that it did not is one of the miracles of the modern world. This tremendous failure left a marked impression on the Germans who served. In spite of their undoubted heroism, their cultivation of the war spirit, and their wonderful discipline they just did not win. Wounded and warped by defeat and depression, there was the natural tendency to find a scapegoat. The soldiers transferred their guilt to others. But what others? Such sources as anti-pacifism, anti-rationalism, and anti-Semitism supplied substitutes. The Nazis were willing to provide these substitutes in the authorities who stabbed the army in the back, the Jews and Marxists, and they thereby gratified those sadistic impulses that marked the German army as it entered Belgium in August 1914. The sadistic impulses of war must find a gratification in days of peace, and one method was to wreak vengeance on those believed to have betrayed the Fatherland. We take an actual case. Two Gestapo men take away a doctor at midnight. His wife learns nothing more of his fate till the arrival of a box for which she has to pay three shillings. It contains his ashes. If his body were returned, it would bear witness to the treatment he had received. Murders were at first few; it was better to torture the victim, keep him alive, and then torture him again. The medieval rack and thumbscrew were useless compared with the subtler forms of torture involved in waiting indefinitely for a trial which, when it came, was a travesty of justice. In the meantime blows on the body and blows on the mind—by hints and rumours—were the order of the day. Take a prisoner, stand him against a wall, shoot at him, but take care not to wound him vitally; then you can stand him against the wall another time. If the prisoner were too dangerous, his murder took place by way of "suicide" or "shot trying to escape." No doubt there were many actual suicides in concentration camps, a matter that occasions no surprise to anyone who knows what these camps mean.

Germany has been a country where the law has received in the past more than lip homage. Her jurists and her judges have commanded respect for their learning and for their integrity. The German courts,

nevertheless, showed signs of their willingness to serve political purposes. Traces of the old spirit remained when in the Reichstag fire trial the Supreme Court gave proof that it required evidence to convict the communists of this outrage. The Nazis were horrified by this frame-of-mind. Were not all the defendants Communists? Were they not on that count alone worthy of beheading, the ancient German way with offenders? One way out of the difficulty was to appoint judges who would not take a purely legal view of their task. They might be chosen for "special experience in fighting attacks directed against the State." Take Hitler's defence of the shocking events of Bloody Saturday, 30th June, 1934, "In this hour I was responsible for the fate of the German nation; thereby the supreme court of the German people, during these twenty-four hours, consisted of myself." Göring explained the outlook of the new jurisprudence when on 12th July, 1934, he whittled away these events. "We do not recognise the exaggerated dictum that the law must prevail, even if everything else collapses. We consider as a primary affair not the law, but the people. First come the people, and the people created for themselves both the law and the State. We are therefore free of all formal over-estimation of the law. . . . The law and the will of Der Führer are one." Even though he announces that Der Führer is infallible, for once we think Hitler was mistaken. For in the eyes of Göring—and countless others—it is not for twenty-four hours he embodies the supreme court but for as long as the Third Reich lasts.

The omnipotent State with the omnipotent statesman stands before us with an authority unpossessed by any Roman Emperor. Der Führer's only serious rivals have been Lenin in the past with Stalin and Mussolini a long way behind him in the present. Obviously the German individual possesses no legal rights when the test is applied in the spirit which Göring enunciates. The Totalitarian State is a jealous god, brooking no rival deities, least of all legal deities. The Reign of Terror existed twice in France and once in Hungary. In Germany, as in Russia and Italy, the Reign of Terror is permanent. The head of an Oxford College visited Germany before 1939, meeting friends he had known for ten, twenty, even thirty years. Some of them were Professors of Political Science, and he tried to learn their views of the existing regime. To a man, even when *tête-à-tête*, they all refused to answer him, though they knew full well that he was incapable of betraying their confidence. The Terror had come home to them all. Terror begets terror, and we are horrified, but not altogether surprised, that none of them dared unburden their souls.

The Nazi creed is "*Volk* before self," and there is much to be said for it. Nevertheless, is the *Volk* to be everything and the self nothing? Neither Fichte nor Hegel could dream a more complete subordination of self to the State than what takes place in their Fatherland. *Volk* before self is the ideal of youth. It is the ideal of women. It is the ideal of the farmer. It is the ideal of the industrialist. In fact, it is the ideal of everyone, yet if *Volk* swallows up self, there is nothing more certain



that *Volk* will in turn be swallowed up by the great Leviathan called the State of Adolf Hitler. Besides, all motives, personal, patriotic and religious, have been enlisted. There is no rival deity because all the deities have been absorbed by *Der Staat*.

(14) *Freedom of the Mind*

Edmund Burke used to preach that he could not draw up an indictment against a nation. His remark may have been true in the eighteenth century, but it is true no longer. For in these days of propaganda everything has been fundamentally altered. The German youth is captivated by the uniform he wears and the holiday camps where he plays. His father, if a farmer, is captivated by the thought of "Blood and Soil" and the "battle for production" he ceaselessly wages. If an artisan, he is captivated by "the strength through joy" movement and by the "self-sufficiency" he is creating for the Fatherland. The woman is nothing more than a breeding machine for her country, content with the three K's which constitute her all-important role in the production of life, and yet more life. All, even the women, can fall under the spell of "God and Fatherland," "German Kultur," "Blood and Honour," and, above all, *Der Fuhrer*. Surely everyone in the pyramid finds his due place. We hardly like to add that woman finds her place, for what is it? The masses are not in much better plight. The contempt of Hitler for the rank and file is profound. They are fit for cannon fodder. Democracy, individual freedom, representative government—all are alike anathema to him.

The two World Wars served mankind grievously by the uses to which science was put. It served mankind no less grievously by the uses to which propaganda was put. Slogans and ceremonies, emblems and flags received a lease of life hitherto denied them on the grand scale. The greatest American advertiser cannot hope to compete with the unrivalled skill of *Der Fuhrer*. In his own particular line he is a positive genius, with an intuitive feeling of what is or is not effective in propaganda. He writes inferior German, as any reader of *Mein Kampf* is painfully aware. Nevertheless, he invents visual and verbal symbols with consummate adroitness.

The eye and the ear are, in propaganda, of vastly more worth than the head, which barely deserves consideration. If the eyes receive attention in the carefully censored matter they read, the ears receive no less attention in the carefully censored music they hear. Music and song take their due share in raising the enthusiasm of the masses to the point of frenzy. It is certainly an amazing experience to hear the *Horst Wesel Lied* sung in the open air by thousands of voices. Another favourite is Dietrich Eckhart's *Deutschland, Erwache!*:

Germany, Awake!

Storm, storm, storm, storm!

From tower to tower peal bells of alarm.

Peal out! Sparks fly as hammers strike.

Comes Judas forth to win the Reich.  
 Peal out! The bloody ropes hang red  
 Around our martyred hero dead.  
 Peal out—that thundering earth may know  
 Salvation's rage for honour's sake.  
 To people dreaming still comes woe.  
 Germany, Awake! Awake!

In spite of this song Germany is asleep, drugged by the narcotics the Nazis so freely administer. Bodies are under strict control: so too are minds, and the latter is the more serious obstacle to the awakening of Germany. The censorship instituted by men like Dr. Göbbels paralyses every field of mental activity. It is life and death to him, to quote the words he repeatedly utters, to insist upon "the uniform moulding of the will," which was the aim too of Nietzsche. How can the original thinker write what he believes when he knows that his ideas may not be acceptable to the authorities? In his *La Storia come pensiero e come azione* Benedetto Croce bears his testimony to Benito Mussolini: "The condemnation of totalitarian regimes is manifest in the sterility of all thought, art, subtlety of criticism, moral response and enthusiasm, no matter what devices are resorted to in order to bribe into existence what is only born through freedom as a work of love. Those regimes can avail themselves for a time, as they actually do, of the impulse left over from previous ages of liberty, of inclinations which were formed then, of accumulated knowledge; but such supply becomes gradually exhausted, the source dries up, no new capable men arise, while those very renouncers of liberty, who at first could render some service, lose whatever they had kept of their former skill through servitude and lack of healthy struggle."

In 1871 Germany sorely needed unity and liberty: she received only unity. In 1933 she sorely needed order and liberty: she received only order. With this order there has been material progress, but has there been non-material? Man cannot live by bread alone. The essence of all inspiration is freedom to think what one pleases, that freedom which the ancients did not hesitate to describe as a divine madness, "enthusiasm." We can, in spite of Hitler and Mussolini, do without liberty only till order is re-established, and then, if the mind is to grow and expand freely, we must at all costs have it. "Those who say or write," according to Croce, "some with jubilation, some with dismay, that freedom has forsaken the world, deserve to be forgiven with Jesus's own words, 'they know not what they do.' If they only knew, if they would only think, they would become aware that to proclaim that freedom is dead is tantamount to proclaiming that life is dead, that its mainspring is broken." Past history attests the deadening influence of all censorship, and yet in spite of the warning of Clio it continues. As Walter Lippmann observes, "Where all think alike, no one thinks very much." Hitler, Göbbels and Rosenberg are as unteachable as any of the exiled Bourbons. They learn nothing while they forget everything.

Truth is generally held to be objective, for if it is not objective men cannot examine it. If a man states he thinks objectively in terms of his reason, other men can examine his thought. If a man states he thinks subjectively in terms of his feelings, other men cannot examine his thought. To such a distinction Nazidom pays no attention. For it holds that truth is necessarily subjective. There can be no truth apart from the searcher-after it. Indeed Nazidom believes that the interpretation of science depends in the last resort on the character of the scientist. For our own part we are content if we can grasp the law of gravitation without in the least feeling it is dependent on our knowledge of the absent-mindedness of Newton. It is true, and its truth has nothing to do with the qualities of the discoverer. Yet so distinguished a man as Max Planck, who has reduced the laws of science to two, holds that "the researcher himself is part of the object which he investigates, whether that object be physical or spiritual." He even maintains that "the importance of a scientific idea is often due not so much to its truthfulness as to its inner value," and this inner value in turn depends upon the character of the man who thinks it, his *Weltanschauung*. We ask, Does the worth of the Phase Rule of Willard Gibbs of Yale, with all its implications, depend on the sort of character he possessed? It is one thing to say with Max Planck "every science, just as every art and every religion, grows on national soil," and an utterly different thing to argue that there is one science for the Germans, another for the French, and yet another for the Canadians. We shall expect to hear next of German gastritis, French fever, and Canadian cancer. After the astounding attitude of Planck, it is less astonishing to listen to Dr. Bernhard Rust, Minister of Science, Education and National Culture, laying down the new way at the 550th anniversary of the University of Heidelberg. He thinks that "The new science is entirely different from the idea of knowledge that found its value in an unchecked effort to reach the truth. The true freedom of science is to be an organ of a nation's living strength and of its historical fate and to present this in obedience to the law of truth." The last sentence simply implies that Nazidom lends its gloss on truth, and transforms it into German truth—whatever that may mean. The organ of a nation's living strength may well be more important under certain circumstances than truth, but it is not the truth that makes the searcher free to pursue it to the utmost bounds. Limits are set to its pursuit, and they are set by the Rusts of to-day and the Rusts of to-morrow. Dr. Rust proclaimed in the presence of marching men uniformed, with draped party flags, at the 550th anniversary of the University of Heidelberg that "a change has taken place in the institution of the higher education since the Nazi party came into power. This change has resulted from the fertile influence of the new *Weltanschauung* and racial realities." Soldiers heard him: scientists outside Germany refused to come to hear him. We cannot believe that the scientists of England and the United States stood aloof for any reason save one, and that was that they could not believe in German science dragooned by the Government. On the façade of one of the buildings

of the University of Heidelberg stood the statue of Pallas Athene with the inscription, "To the eternal spirit." The lovely statue has been replaced by a German eagle with the inscription, "To the German spirit." Naturally we experience no surprise when Dr. Rosenberg announced that "it is not true that there is such a thing as an objective view of history." After all, is not history his story? The German professor of history must teach many matters, but at all costs he must teach the supremacy of the Nordic race and what it has accomplished for the Fatherland.

It is a relief to turn from the historical creed now professed to the story told of the meeting of Merle d'Aubigné and Leopold von Ranke. Both had written on the Reformation. As the former encountered the latter he spoke of their common labours as historians. The scientific professor drew back from contact with the controversialist. "You," pronounced Ranke magisterially, "wrote as a Protestant, but I wrote as an historian." It is not too much to say that Merle d'Aubigné would suit the taste of Nazidom far better than Ranke—if his controversy took the Nazi side. The great Ranke passed away in 1886, and it is painful to note how gravely his Fatherland in 1939 has fallen away from his ideals. The historian is no longer an individualist: he is a submissive exponent of the ideals of the State.

## CHAPTER IX

### PRIVATE AND PUBLIC MORALITY

#### (1) *The Antique Attitude*

IN his inaugural lecture at Cambridge, Lord Acton in 1895 sternly exhorted his audience never to debase the moral currency or lower the standard of rectitude but at all costs to try others by the final maxim that governs their own lives. For "if we lower our standard in History, we cannot uphold it in Church or State." To-day we have thrown away the old belief in progress, and have refused to replace this ideal, yet the pages of history used to lend a belief in it. The Greek blending of private and public morality was by no means high, yet the morality of the city and the citizen was alike. Aristotle conceived that a policy had to be executed "because it was noble to do it, and not to do it was disgraceful." The Romans raised this level of conduct to a loftier height. They observed in their policy to other peoples the model of morality they had erected for their citizens. To be sure, occasionally they lapsed from this model, yet this ideal frequently proved the real. For Marcus Aurelius universal morality exists, and it is the same for the emperor as statesman and as man. When Brutus assassinated Cæsar, he remained a murderer, and *raison d'état* was not alleged in condonation. No one erected a memorial tablet to his deed, as Hitler erected one to

the murderers of Dollfuss. No one entered on his behalf the plea of Cavour, an honourable gentleman in private life, "If we did for ourselves what we are doing for Italy we would be considered *vrais coquins*."

As we look back at the Middle Ages, we feel tempted to put a halo around them, even though Mr. Coulton acts as *advocatus diaboli*.<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding this historian, these Ages, down to the fourteenth century, did not fall below the classical level of public morality. What was evil for a man to do was evil for the State to do. Indeed the level of the State often rose above that of the individual. Men then never fought for racial conceptions, for nationality, for the liberation of this folk or that, for glory or for propaganda. True, the Crusades, the struggle between England and Scotland, and the Hundred Years' War seem to afford conclusive proof of a warlike spirit. Still with the exception of the Norman Conquest, where special pleading was employed, men eagerly sought to prove that their cause was just, and because of its justice they were not unwillingly forced to resort to arms. They were of the opinion of Abraham Lincoln who trusted not that God was fighting on his side but that he was fighting on the side of God. The medieval man respected law so profoundly that he sought to have it always on his side. If he coveted his neighbour's vineyard, he went, as Stubbs put it, "as it were to law for it, and did not simply take it." The medieval man resorted to war when law failed him, yet even then war was an ordeal attended with all the forms and ceremonies of law. It was at least the tribute hypocrisy pays to virtue. Nothing could be more alien to this spirit than the seizure of Austria in 1938, the rape of Czechoslovakia in 1939, and war without a declaration on Poland in 1939, followed by war without a declaration by Japan on the United States and the British Empire in 1941. Behind all these flagrant violations of international law the figure of Adolf Hitler stealthily stalks. He asserts that the bigger the lie, the better its chance of being believed. Yet his favourite house lies at the summit of the long defile to the glen and lake of Berchtesgaden, where, according to ancient legend, the noble Emperor Frederick Barbarossa sleeps amid his knights in an enchanted sleep. One day when the ravens shall cease to hover around the peak and the pear-tree blossoms in the valley, he shall surely descend with his Crusaders and bring back to the Fatherland the golden age of unity and strength, of peace and righteousness. If it were possible for his sleep to be broken, what would he think of the man who in 1939 claims to be as representative of the Third Reich as the Emperor was of the First?

The Reformation followed the weak, futile, bloody, and immoral fifteenth century. The succeeding century witnessed the dissolution of the *Respublica Christiana*. Its rulers had long acted in its spirit, though during the fifteenth century they paid no more than lip-service to this splendid conception. We can measure the change when we reflect that the idea of the *Respublica Christiana* involved the unity of civilisation,

<sup>1</sup> Generally speaking, we entertain the warmest admiration of this historian to whom we owe so much for his insight into the past.

the allegiance of humanity, and joint responsibility for the welfare of the world of Europe. Henceforth our continent is an anarchy, instead of a system of States. Thanks to the new geographical, astronomical, economic, and political considerations the sixteenth century transformed these ideas. The doctrine of State sovereignty, joined to the doctrine of political necessity, at last emerged. Morality was no longer universal, identical for the king as statesman and as man. Instead of the classical and medieval standard a Charles V urged such pleas as "The promise was extracted from us." More craftily, a Francis I argued, "We cannot allow the State and the people entrusted to us to perish in order that we may keep our word." Most subtly of all, a Henry VIII pleaded, "We would like to keep our bond—unfair though it has proved to be—but how can we? Events are too strong for us." In short, evil was one conception for the subject and a wholly different one for the sovereign. *Raison d'état*, *die Idee der Staaträson*, call it what you will, steps on the stage of political life. Monarchy had been a trust: now it was a privilege. It had been a stewardship: now it was a property. The selfishness natural to the prince as a man merged in the selfishness of the sovereign. Was it not a sacred selfishness as he was the saviour of his land? The transition from the newly devised doctrine of State sovereignty to its righteousness was one readily accepted. The next step from this doctrine to the newly devised doctrine of political necessity was a longer one, but in time it too was accepted. The sovereign was not unmoral: he was amoral, with a righteousness peculiarly his own. *Respublica Christiana* dissolved as if it had never existed. National interests stood out as the paramount concern of the monarch, and overrode all law, all morality. The relationship between States reached the one postulated by Hobbes where the member of one looked on the member of another as *homo homini lupus*. No law, human or divine, controlled the ruler.

The sixteenth century witnessed the destruction of papal Europe and the construction of States replacing it. In truth, the continent was no longer a system of States: it was simply an anarchy possessing no conception of public morality. The natural man disliked the "foreigner," the citizen of another State or another neighbourhood: theology embittered this dislike. How can public morality flourish where people heartily hate one another? More published his *Utopia* in 1517 and Machiavelli his *Prince* in 1532, though both works had been circulating in manuscript before publication. Let us read the views of More on the new morality:

"If I should propose to any king wholesome decrees, doing my endeavour to pluck out of his mind the pernicious original causes of vice and naughtiness, think you not that I should forthwith either be driven away, or else made a laughing-stock? Well, suppose I were with the French king, and there sitting in his council, whilst in that most secret consultation, the king himself there being present in his own person, they beat their brains, and search the very bottom of their wits to discuss by what craft and means the king may still keep Milan, and draw to

him again fugitive Naples, and then how to conquer the Venetians, and how to bring under his jurisdiction all Italy, then how to win the dominion of Flanders, Brabant, and of all Burgundy: with divers other lands. Here whilst one counsellor to conclude a league of peace with the Venetians, so long to endure, as shall be thought meet and expedient for their purpose, and to make them also of their counsel, yea, and besides to give them part of their prey, which afterward, when they have brought their purpose about, after their own minds, they may require and claim again. Another thinketh it best to hire the Germans. Another would have the favour of the Swiss. Another's advice is to appease the puissant power of the Emperor's majesty with gold, as with a most pleasant sacrifice."

## (2) *The Possession of Power*

Let us turn from More to Meinecke who in our generation forcibly puts the case for *raison d'état*. He proceeds from the individual to the State. The primitive individual strives for power and possession as strongly as the herd. As man satisfies his physical needs, he widens his outlook. He climbs the steep ascent to civilisation, and in his climb he encounters the conflicting paths of Kratos, the craving for power, and Ethos, the sense of moral responsibility. He builds a connecting road, *raison d'état*, between them. One side of it looks to the instinctive, the actual, the natural: the other looks to the rational, the ideal, the spiritual. Can he combine the two in one? Yes, thinks Meinecke, for they meet in the common weal of all. Before this meeting, however, man travels over a flinty surface with many a jolt on the road. As he moves over the surface he meets a guide, the ruler, who controls both sides, and his control is of sterling worth. For the organisation to which he belongs, the State, stands supreme over all other organisations. These aim at ideal standards, but does the State so aim? *Die Idee der Staaträson* determines its position sometimes towards right, sometimes wrong. The ruler oscillates between them. In a word, he must be Cavour's rascal, doing for his country what he dare not do for himself. His art of government, to borrow a phrase of Nietzsche, is beyond good and evil. Herein lies the tragic aspect of history: the State cannot invariably obey moral behests and its members cannot be moralised. Even if they could be, could the members of other States be moralised? That is, the State lives in two worlds, the ideal and the real. The conflict between them began long before Machiavelli and still endures. Is it, however, so unequal as Meinecke would have us believe? The struggle between Kratos and Ethos is plain in the history of man, and man on the whole leans to Ethos. Consider how much the sway of Kratos has been abated. Gladiatorial games, witchcraft, and torture have largely disappeared, though Dictatorial States have restored the last. Not even an optimist can hope for the complete victory of Ethos but can he not hope for the slow advance of moral principle? May

not the conquests of the past continue indefinitely? At bottom the answer to these questions turns on the conception we form of the nature of man. If we believe in Kratos, we believe in the permanence of the warfare of man with man. If we believe in Ethos, we believe in the partnership and the co-operation of man.

In the *Discourses* on Livy Machiavelli assumes a loftier attitude than in *The Prince*, but for the one reader of the former there have been a hundred of the latter. Accordingly, he stands before posterity with *The Prince* in his hand. In it he bids us reflect on the model monarch, Cesare Borgia, Duke of Romagna, son of Pope Alexander VI:

"When all the actions of the duke are recalled, I do not know how to blame him, but rather it appears to me, as I have said, that I ought to offer him for imitation to all those who, by the fortune or the arms of others, are raised to the Government. Because he, having a lofty spirit and far-reaching aims, could not have regulated his conduct otherwise, and only the shortness of the life of Alexander and his own sickness frustrated his designs. Therefore, he who considers it necessary to secure himself in his new principality, to win friends, to overcome either by force or fraud, to make himself beloved and feared by the people, to be followed and revered by the soldiers, to exterminate those who have power or reason to hurt him, to change the old order of things for the new, to be severe and gracious, magnanimous and liberal, to destroy a disloyal soldiery and create a new, to maintain friendships with kings and princes in such a way that they must help with zeal and offend with caution, cannot find a more lively example than the actions of this man."

Charles V and his son and his courtiers all perused *The Prince*. Thomas Cromwell brought it back from Italy, and slept with a copy of it under his pillow. Catherine de Medici, the daughter of the man to whom the book was dedicated, brought it to France, and Kratos urged her to massacre thousands of Huguenots. Her son, Henry III, always carried it in his pocket. When murdered, he and Henry IV both had it on their persons. Sacred rulers like the Popes approved of it every whit as much as secular ones. Like Leo X and Clement VII, Sixtus V pondered over its maxims, summarising them in his own handwriting. When Fra Paolo Sarpi was stabbed in Venice he coolly remarked, *Agnosco stilum curiae*. "We are much beholden," reflected Bacon, moved by Ethos as well as Kratos, "to Machiavel and others that wrote what men do and not what they ought to do." In truth, *The Prince* proved to be the handbook of princes.

In spite of the attacks of Bodin and Campanella, the book made its way with statesmen, and a reader like Christina of Sweden, daughter of Gustavus Adolphus—a chivalrous crusader if ever there was one—was forced to admit that "there are certain ills only to be cured by blood and fire," a sentiment strikingly like Bismarck's belief in blood and iron. Richelieu, who was solely actuated by State interest, thought so warmly of *The Prince* that he ordered Louis Machon, Archdeacon of Toul, to pen a vigorous apologia. For Harrington Machiavelli is "the only



politician of later ages." The young Frederick the Great wrote a *Réfutation du Prince de Machiavel*, and spent the rest of his life in practical adherence to its teaching. His conception of mankind was as low as Hitler's of the political capacity of the German race. "You do not know the accursed race," was Frederick's retort to an optimist. Honour and State interest, he informed the elder Pitt at the height of the Seven Years' War, were his two guiding principles, and a man thus fortified would never yield to his foes. Peace and war, Ethos and Kratos, were merely alternating phases of the same ceaseless struggle. Diplomacy without armaments, declared this faithful disciple of Kratos, was like music without instruments, a remark akin to the *obiter dictum* of Clausewitz that war is the continuation of policy by other means. "The acts of the statesman," avowed Napoleon, "which considered individually are so often blamed by the world, form an integral part of a great work, afterwards to be admired, and by which alone they are to be judged. Elevate your imagination, look farther before you, and you will see that the personages you deem violent, cruel, and what not, are only politicians knowing how to master their passions, and expert in calculating the effect of their actions. I have shed blood, and it was my duty; I may perhaps shed more, but without anger, and merely because blood-letting is one of the prescriptions of political surgery. I am a man of the State, I am the Revolution." Nor is it to be forgotten that when Machiavelli penned his last chapter, in which he dreamed of the future unity of the land he loved, he wrote in his exhortation an accurate account of that which, after the lapse of more than three and a half centuries, our fathers witnessed. Cavour and Victor Emmanuel, Mazzini and Garibaldi, proved that experience and history could execute the prophecy uttered by Machiavelli, and in this execution Kratos played a subordinate part to Ethos. Mussolini has publicly recommended *The Prince* to the attention of the Fascist diplomatists, and Hitler's career demonstrates his adherence to its precepts.

### (3) *The Spirit of Grotius and Its Enemies*

Italy achieved her unity by means of war, though blood is a poor cement. Machiavelli had proved a true prophet. Forty years after his death the wars of the Low Countries broke out, waged in his spirit. They are unparalleled for relentless savagery and unbridled brutality—till our own generation. It is enough to recall Alva and his devilries. Though the Dutchman Grotius began his *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* in 1604, it did not appear till 1625. The Thirty Years' War had only run seven years of its course, and the sack of Magdeburg still lay in the womb of time. Sufficient horrors had been perpetrated to induce men to ask whether a restraining principle could not be found. He seeks to discover something behind customary law partaking of the universal order. For there were as many customs as nations. He seeks something immutable, something catholic, and this he finds in the law of nature.

The word international he does not employ, and indeed it was not coined by Bentham till 1780, and it is significant that the word internationalism does not appear till 1876 when a novelist, Maria M. Grant, who is not otherwise known to fame, coined it in *The Sun-Maid*. In spite of the absence of law courts and of their sanctions in international affairs, is there not natural justice imperiously clamouring for the obedience of all, no matter what sovereignty claims their allegiance? He shows that justice exists in the individual as in the State. In fact Grotius bases his theory of justice between nations upon the fact that man has two judges, his own conscience and the judgment of the society to which he belongs. Modern writers on international law insist that it is a law between States and not between individuals, involving the grave consequence that individual morality belongs to one category and State morality—if there is such a thing—to another. His theory stoutly opposes this difference, for his international law condemns private war as much as public. In the line of Grotian tradition stands Field-Marshal Smut's conception of the difference between private and public war, the latter including not war "for its own individual ends but for police purposes in concert with others." The leading principle of Grotius, like that of Smuts, appears sometimes as equity, the law of charity, or the love of one's neighbour "especially as enjoined by the Christian law." The natural rule is that you can take against the enemy whatever steps are necessary to attain the end of a just war, but you must not inflict upon him needless injury.

Repeatedly Grotius stops to contrast the principle, with all its varying forms, and true natural law. Roughly, he regards the principle as that regulating the conduct of the individual. True natural law regulates the conduct of States. While the individual demands from himself the higher standard of the principle, from others he simply demands the adoption of true natural law. Strict natural law is the final measurement of no man's duty: it is the measure of the behaviour he is entitled to require from others. Of course we are bound to pay the debts of justice and to carry out all that morality further demands. Are we entitled to require this standard from others? By no means. Are we entitled to require from them obedience to true natural law? By all means. If they fail us in this case, we are unquestionably entitled to wage a just war. The laws of nature are invariably binding internally; we are invariably bound to desire that they should come into operation; but they are not invariably binding externally. Practically we come, in another guise, to Machiavelli's conclusion that private and public morality belong to two different categories.

The publication of the masterpiece of Grotius marked an era in the relationship of States. Edition after edition poured forth from the press, meeting with a warm welcome. Statesmen as well as scholars read it eagerly. Gustavus Adolphus carried it with him as his constant camp companion. "If gold and silver could contribute aught to the redemption of such a glorious life," wrote the strange Christina of Sweden to Grotius's widow, "I would gladly employ all in my possession for that result."

Pufendorf won the favour of Charles Louis, the Elector Palatine, by his studies on the writings of Grotius, with the result that Pufendorf received in 1661 a call to the newly-founded chair of Natural or International Law in Heidelberg. Within sixteen years of the death of the great Dutchman International Law had won a place side by side with the code of Justinian as a subject of systematic university study. Though not prejudiced in favour of Grotius, Richelieu considered him one of the three foremost scholars of his age, the other two being Salmasius and Bignon. The latter, distinguished as Advocate-General, declared that Grotius was the most learned man the world had known since Aristotle. Clearly the year 1625 marked a milestone on the road to the political and spiritual unity of the world. It directed the thoughts of man towards this far-off divine event to which man was moving. Alack! the tome of 1625 possessed nothing like the influence of the slender book of 1531. Machiavelli, the counsellor of expediency, supplanted Grotius, the exponent of Natural Law. Princes, like the emancipated colonists of a later age, remained feudatories in thought after the tie of power had been snapped. The age of co-operation had passed away: the age of non-co-operation had taken its place. Why was the political atmosphere of the seventeenth century with its colonisation so different from that of the days when the Roman Empire swept forward with the conception of authority to northern and western Europe? Why did not the opening up of North America and of the Indies lead to the transplantation of medieval political ideas into non-European soil? Why did not the forces tending towards economic internationalism lead to an increase in the area of the old universalism, or at least some form of internationalism? In the sixteenth century Spanish jurists like Vittoria announced that Christian duty and Natural Law recognised neither latitude nor longitude, applying equally to Europeans and to American Indians. With Grotius, Vittoria proclaimed that "the whole earth is in some sort one republic."

When great men die the age they enriched seems suddenly to shrink into poverty. Grotius was such a man, and his death reveals such a barrenness. The events of his time were of stupendous magnitude; they are the creations of man, yet they seem to ask of him more than he can give. They demand that he should be a finer, nobler being, as well as a far more clear-sighted one, than he seems able to be. So Swift thought as he reflected on the history of his generation. Gulliver informed the King of Brobdingnag of the private and public morality of his countrymen, and the royal verdict was: "By what I have gathered from your own relation, and the answers I have with much pains wringed and extorted from you, I cannot but conclude the bulk of your natives to be the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth."

(4) *The Frederickian Ideal*

State selfishness dominated the foreign policy of the eighteenth century, though remarkably enough, its statesmen were as high-minded in their national aims as they were low-minded in their international. Fleury and Walpole, Frederick the Great and Chatham, Catherine the Great and Charles III, Joseph II and William Pitt, were differing types of benevolent despots. Monarchy had been a privilege: now it was a trust. It had been a property: now it was a stewardship. The selfishness natural to the prince as a man merged in the unselfishness of the sovereign. While State morality soared to the heights, international morality sank to the depths. In his *Histoire de mon Temps* Frederick the Great explains his flagrant violation of the rights of Maria Theresa when he tore up his solemn signature to respect them. "Powerful reasons obliged me to give at the commencement of my reign marks of vigour and firmness, to furnish to the military class means of acquiring glory, and to make the nation to be respected in Europe."

Not for the first time in her history the thinkers of France set their faces against force and fraud. Men like Le Roy and Fontenelle, Saint Sorlin and Perrault, Montesquieu and Morellet, Helvetius and Voltaire, Rousseau and Turgot, Condorcet and Comte, in diverse fashions, bestowed upon their country its peculiar prominence in announcing, developing, and expanding the conception of progress. Among this band the Abbé de Saint-Pierre takes his place as of right. Does not progress so widen its compass as to clamour for the social perfection of man? So he believed, and in this happy belief he wrote his *Projet de Paix Perpetuelle*. In the spirit of the reply of the King of Brobdingnag Frederick the Great commented upon the Abbé, "who distinguishes me so far as to honour me with his correspondence, has sent me a most excellent treatise on the means of restoring peace to all Europe, and on the manner of preserving it continually. The project is exceedingly practicable, nor is anything except the consent of all Europe and some other such like trifles wanting for its encouragement." It never occurred to Frederick II, as it never occurred to Chatham, that States in their relations to one another had duties as well as rights. Just as to Frederick Austria was an enemy to be struck down, so was France to Chatham.

To the voices of Vittoria and Grotius, insisting on the responsibilities of members of the Christian Commonwealth, Frederick II, in his *Political Testament* proved as deaf as Hitler himself. In it he declares: "The great matter is to conceal one's designs, and to cover up one's character. . . . Policy consists rather in profiting by favourable conjunctures than in preparing them in advance. This is why I counsel you not to make treaties depending upon uncertain events, and to keep your hands free. For then you can make your decision, according to time, place, and the condition of your affairs; in a word, according as your interest requires of you. I did well by acting thus in 1740 (the rape of Silesia). Machiavelli says that a disinterested Power, situated among ambitious

Powers, could not avoid ultimate destruction. I hate to admit it, but I am obliged to confess that Machiavelli is right. Ambition is necessary to princes, but so is wisdom, measured and enlightened by reason. If the desire for aggrandisement does not procure acquisitions to a pacific prince, at least it sustains his power, because the same means which he means to employ in aggressive action will always be ready for defending the State." In accordance with this testament Frederick proposed the partition of Poland to Joseph II and Catherine the Great, and these three enlightened despots committed one of the greatest crimes of the eighteenth century, a crime for which we are still paying. There are indeed differences between private and public morality. With the individual payment for his ill deeds ceases within a generation or two, but with public morality payment never ceases.

#### (5) *The Welfare State and the Power State*

The French Revolution set out with the noble ideal of liberty, equality, and fraternity for other kingdoms as well as for France. This Revolution was far more European than French, and as a European transformation it spread. From his first victories in 1796 Napoleon proved himself as ruthless as any modern dictator. He was as wanting in private morality as in public, yet he could urge that he was not a whit worse than the eighteenth century benevolent despots who carved up Poland among themselves. His wars openly denied the teaching of Vittoria and Grotius. That the State lives in two worlds is abundantly clear. It was reserved for a contemporary of Napoleon, Hegel, to declare that the two worlds are one; that there was no true conflict between policy and morals. He proclaimed that the real is the rational and the rational the real. Meinecke compares his patronage of Machiavelli to the legitimization of a bastard, and yet present-day German thinkers calmly acquiesce in it. In their spirit Hegel regards war as the sole arbitrator between State and State, and in deciding for war the State pays sole attention to its own interests. In spite of Hegel, the duration of the French wars from 1792 to 1815 decisively turned men against aggression, and Alexander I of Russia, Francis II of Austria, and Frederick William III of Prussia signed the Holy Alliance in 1815 by which they prescribed the identity of private and public morality. It formally adopted the Christian ethic for all relations of States with one another. The teaching of Vittoria and Grotius at last had come into its own. Political separatism had proved a failure. Co-operation was the order of the day. There must be some way, so the sovereigns and statesmen believed, of reconciling the diverse ideals of progress and order. A state of tension between two poles—order and welfare, justice and liberty, life and the good life—could not permanently endure. The soul of man was attuned to the universal, though his body remained held fast by nationalism. With the spread of International Law man must burst his national bounds, and in some measure the Holy Alliance

indicated this frame of mind. Naturally the transition from the ideal to the real is by no means easy of accomplishment. From 1815 to 1854 the Holy Alliance was tested, and gradually *raison d'état* triumphed. It was a failure, even a noble failure, yet it is better to have tried and failed than never to have tried at all.

Rousseau, Kant, Fichte, and Hegel proved in one fashion as potent causes of the failure of the Holy Alliance as Castlereagh, Talleyrand, Hardenberg, and, above all, Metternich in another. The four thinkers dimly discerned that they stood at the parting of the ways. The four statesmen, as they lived later, proved more clear-sighted in their outlook. While Castlereagh recognised the good in the new standard of public morality, he no less recognised the evil in the practice of intervention by the Holy Alliance in the domestic life of a State.

The ideals of the early nineteenth century stand as contrasted as those of the early twentieth century. Just as the Holy Alliance endeavoured to bridge the gulf separating them, so did the League of Nations, and both signally failed in their heroic endeavour. What were the underlying causes of this failure? It lay in the fundamental conflict between two types of States which we venture to call a Welfare State and a Power State. The Welfare State seeks to identify private and public morality while the Power State separates them as widely as possible. The one has for its ideal the interpenetration of law, the other the collision of force with force. The one thinks of government in terms of responsibility: the other thinks of it in terms of power. The one bestows freedom upon all its citizens, Jews and Gentiles alike, thereby assuring the freedom of the government. The other bestows freedom upon the elect few with master morality, thereby assuring the ultimate slavery of all, governors as well as governed. The one refuses to sacrifice the individual upon the altar of the State. The other gladly contemplates this sacrifice. The end of the one is the security, the happiness, of the individual; of the other, the security, the happiness, of the State. One realises with Samuel Johnson:

How small, of all that human hearts endure,  
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure!  
Still to ourselves in every place consign'd,  
Our own felicity we make or find.

The other blankly refuses to admit this point of view. The one has a flexible constitution, changing and developing as the life of its people grows. The other has a rigid constitution—if it has one at all—standing as a fortification against any onslaught of revolution. The one works out its policy, at home and abroad, through the identification of private and public morality as far as it can, by consent and persuasion. The other tries, at home and abroad, its power to command and its ability to secure obedience. The one diffuses its authority and its local governments, encouraging individual responsibility. The other centralises its authority, and rigidly supervises any bodies it allows to exist,

encouraging corporate responsibility. The one regards democracy as a means of educating man and woman into a sense of public duty. The other regards autocracy as a means of disciplining man and woman till each becomes imbued with the spirit of the centurion of old, dowered with mass willing as well as mass feeling. The one establishes the good life, the other the ersatz life with mass thought substituted for individual thinking. In a word, the aim of the one is co-operation between countries as well as between individuals; the aim of the other is competition between countries as well as between individuals. Up to now the *homo homini lupus* attitude has prevailed. Must it always prevail?

It was out of the rivalry of the Welfare State and the Power State that the two World Wars fundamentally arose—and out of this rivalry, if it continues, another war assuredly will arise. In 1858 Lincoln declared with all the emphasis at his command: “‘A house divided against itself cannot stand.’ I believe this government cannot endure permanently, half slave and half free.” In our turn we believe that neither Europe nor the world can remain in this position. The Holy Alliance failed because at bottom it formed a Power State. The League of Nations failed for precisely the same reason. Under changed forms and under new names the phenomena of the Holy Alliance reproduced themselves at Geneva. Just as bad money drives good out of circulation, so power politics inevitably drives out welfare politics.

Great thinkers, like Vittoria and Grotius, never have a large audience, but do not therefore think that they do not influence the mass Hitler professes to despise. The tomes of Vittoria and Grotius are like the watersheds of the world, high up in the mountain, down whose sides the waters flow in thousands of tortuous courses till they at last reach the plain, refreshing millions who know nothing of their source. Who now outside college walls reads Plato? And yet Emerson tells us the world would have been quite different if Plato had never written. And how many men and women are there whose minds have been moulded by Vittoria and Grotius, though they have never glanced at their writings?

#### (6) *Realism in Public Life*

After the failure of the Holy Alliance reaction was inevitable, and accordingly from 1856 to 1871 is among the most immoral periods we know—till our own generation. In Italy Cavour and Mazzini, Garibaldi and Victor Emmanuel, unified their country. In Germany Bismarck and Moltke, Roon and William I, unified their country. The unification of both took place by means not precisely moral. Statesmen, soldiers, and thinkers bequeathed to their lands legacies now being paid. In blunt English just as they debased the moral currency of nations, so they debauched their citizens. They were estimable men in private life, but how shall we find language to characterise their public? One advised assassination, another, with the hearty assent of his two colleagues, forged a vital telegram. Of course they pursued their plans

for the sake of the public weal, but did they not encourage the individual to believe that if assassination and forgery served the State, they might also serve his private ends? They encouraged the omission of morals in public life, forgetting that nations generally pay a heavier price for their sins of omission than for their sins of commission. Did conscience cause Cavour and Bismarck the sleepless nights which the nervous torture of their brains produced? When Bismarck lied for national ends, he lied in the spirit of Luther. He lied *fortiter*, like the hero he felt himself to be. Fear, greed, and jealousy were the motives he discerned in international life. A sharp sword was the only weapon of his policy. But think of the price of this sharp sword. "Germany," declared Moltke in 1875, "must remain armed to the teeth for fifty years in order to keep what took her six months to win." He erred in his calculation, for she still remains armed, fighting as a Power State till her defeat. For Bismarck found an apt pupil in Hitler who grasped the gospel of force as the end and the justification of whatever the State executed.

Neither Bismarck nor Frederick the Great paid much attention to professors—except when their teaching served the ends they had in view. Did not Frederick II state with perfect truth that when he seized Silesia his professors would find reasons for his conduct? Similarly Bismarck, if he cared to avail himself of professorial learning, could readily have found whatever he required for the vindication of his policy. In 1875 Rümelin, Chancellor of Tübingen University, taught that "the State is autarkic." "Self regard is its appointed duty; the maintenance and development of its own power and well-being—egoism, if you call this egoism—is the supreme principle of all politics." "The State can only have regard to the interest of any other State so far as this can be identified with its own interest." "Self-devotion is the principle for the individual, self-assertion for the State." "The maintenance of the State justified every sacrifice, and is superior to every moral rule." The success of the wars of 1864, 1866, and 1870-1 had mentally intoxicated the Germans, and their professors not least of all. To this intoxication the illimitable egoism and the illimitable brigandage of Napoleon III, the reaction from the political idealism of the later eighteenth century, the reaction from its cosmopolitanism, and the Neo-paganism that substituted patriotism for Christianity, contributed. Added to these uniting causes was the triumph of the historical method which, combined with the Hegelian doctrine that the real is the rational, produced the inference that might is right. Nor did the figures of Machiavelli and Hobbes stand far from the professorial chair.

Treitschke lectured at the Universities of Heidelberg and Berlin to crowded audiences, and lectured as a Saxon turned Prussian, more Prussian than the Prussians themselves. His father, General von Treitschke, protested that the political principles of his son were incompatible with Christian religion and morality. The son refused to entertain the conception of the ideal human community which Kant envisaged. Treitschke admits that the spread of Christianity created a load, unknown to the ancients, for professing Christians. Yet for him the burden is



lightly borne. It is the guiding merit of Machiavelli, he preaches, to have set the State on its own feet; freed it from the moral sway of the Church, and, above all, declared for the first time that the State was power. "The maintenance of power," according to the deaf professor, "is a task of incomparable grandeur for the State; but lest it should contradict its own nature its aims must be moral. Every moral judgment of the historian must be based on the hypothesis of the State as power, constrained to maintain itself within and without; and man's highest destiny is co-operation in this duty." So far he is as much on the side of Ethos as Hegel himself. But presently we learn of the moral and spiritual greatness of a large and potent State. This State stands high above the individuals who compose it, and their welfare is not necessarily its. Accordingly, it need not inquire if its actions are approved or disapproved by its subjects, for it is the guardian of the national destiny, a trustee for the weal of unborn generations. Naturally it pays no attention to the unity of civilisation, for it owes allegiance to no external authority. International law is a phrase and no more. A Treaty is a voluntary self-limitation, and no State can hamper its freedom of action by it. "The sin of weakness in politics is the sin against the Holy Ghost" for which there is no forgiveness. War is a positive good, a school of patriotism and an instrument of statesmanship. War is to Treitschke, as to Nietzsche, the only medicine for a sick people. It unites the nation truly and spiritually as it cannot otherwise be united. It is Kratos that demands war and Ethos that rejects it. "The hope of banishing war," in the considered judgment of Treitschke, "is not only meaningless but immoral; for its disappearance would turn the earth into a great temple of selfishness." Here is the echo of Moltke's voice crying that "perpetual peace is a dream, and not even a beautiful dream." As Treitschke disavows his temporary friendship with Ethos, he announces, "The essence of a State is firstly, power; secondly, power; thirdly, power." Granted that he is right in his analysis of the secret of the State, power as its sole aim inevitably means idolatry of the State, *hubris* on the part of its citizens, and the glorification of war on the part of its rulers.

In 1914 the teaching of Rümelin and Treitschke bore tragic fruit. The German Chancellor, Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg, allowed himself to be overborne by the military arguments of the General Staff, and granted permission for the invasion of Belgium. "The wrong," he admitted in the Reichstag, "the wrong we thereby commit we will try to make good as soon as our military aims have been attained." No one realised better than Bismarck the importance of formal correctitude in the initiation of hostilities, an importance forgotten by Hitler in 1939 in his war on Poland and by General Tojo in his war on the United States and the British Empire in 1941. The invasion of Austria by the Germans and Hitler's palliation of that lawless deed in 1938 was followed in due course by the rape of Czechoslovakia. The invasions of Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, France, Yugoslavia, Greece and Russia succeeded them. These invasions combined, above all, with the attacks on Poland, the United States, and the British Empire while negotiations

for peace were proceeding and without any formal declaration of war, raise anew the problem of the conduct of the Prince or the people, for the people are as likely to indulge in the view that necessity knows no law, and that they must hack their way to social or other reform. They forget that Napoleon fell because he trusted in bayonets as Bismarck trusted in blood and iron, as Hitler and Tojo fell for the same reason. The methods of all four lead to the "force and fraud" contemplated by Hobbes. Bismarck records the remark made to him by Walewski, the French Foreign Minister, in 1857, that it was the business of an ambassador to cloak the interests of his country in the language of universal justice. Our generation has dropped this poor pretence. The immoral State faces the immoral man it has in some degree created. Lord Acton used to say that "great men are almost always bad men," quoting Walpole's *obiter dictum* that "no great country was ever saved by good men," for they will not "go the necessary lengths." But have these lengths proved permanently successful? Engels, who lived through the stirring epoch from 1820 to 1895, declared that "without force and iron ruthlessness nothing is achieved in history," yet Moltke stands close to him to remind us that for half a century Germany must arm herself to the teeth to preserve her spoils which she lost in 1919, and has lost again in 1945.

### (7) *Public and Private Morality*

In 1895 that singularly candid thinker, Henry Sidgwick, raised the question of public and private morality in two penetrating essays. He cannot think either that a man must sacrifice his welfare for that of the State or that he has no obligation to the rest of mankind. For the reverse of such a frame of mind leads to the destruction of all bodies inside the State which becomes the great Leviathan of Hobbes's imagination. He concludes that so far as the past conduct of any foreign State shows that reciprocal fulfilment of international duty cannot reasonably be expected from it, then any other State that may have transactions with it must be allowed a corresponding extension of the rights of self-protection in the interest of humanity, no less than in its own interest. "It must," he believes, "be allowed to anticipate attack when it has reasonable grounds for regarding it as imminent, to meet wiles with wiles as well as force with force, and to be circumspect in the fulfilment of any compact it may make with such a State. But I do not regard this as constituting a fundamental difference between public and private morality; similar rights may have to be exceptionally claimed and exercised between man and man in the most orderly society that we have experience of; the difference is mainly in the degree of exceptionality of the claim."

From the point of view of the nineteenth century Sidgwick saw the individual as well as the State stand out with the prominence due to each. From the point of view of the sixteenth century Machiavelli saw

the State stand out with scarcely any foothold for the individual. An amoral State assumes the eminent position with all the weighty authority an astute Italian could lend it. The divorce between ethics and politics, between Ethos and Kratos, was as complete as his head desired.

For a single State to follow Ethos while its neighbour follows Kratos is a suicidal policy. The danger is that Kratos breeds want of confidence. International relationship has suffered again and again by suspicion of sincerity. In every war the first casualty is truth. In the past peaceable powers like England and the United States proposed drastic reduction of armaments, but their proposal was wrecked by the fears of other nations, fears often engendered by propaganda.

To take the way of Ethos is not at all easy. The giant propaganda stands stoutly at its entrance, forbidding passage to it. So do other considerations far more subtle. The more we shift our point of view from the individual to the national, the more we emphasise the egoistic impulses at the expense of the social. Nor is this a paradox. For the validity of morality weakens as we apply it increasingly to public affairs. An individual may sacrifice himself for the sake of an ideal, but can the individual, who is also a statesman, sacrifice his own country? A statesman of the class of Cavour rather than of Bismarck will bear in mind what affects the Commonwealth of Europe—provided his land does not suffer severely. Egoism on his own behalf is sinful: egoism on behalf of Italy is sacred. Cavour would certainly have run risks for himself he never would have run for his country. A patriot even of the type of the great Lord Salisbury was capable of transmuting his individual unselfishness into national selfishness. For loyalty to the nation ranks higher with such a man than loyalty to one's self or one's class, and this loyalty is thus enriched by the altruistic ideals of self and class, turning them into a passionate devotion. Take Kipling:

Land of our birth, we pledge to thee  
Our love and toil in the years to be;  
When we are grown and take our place,  
As men and women with our race.

Father in Heaven who lovest all,  
Oh, help Thy children when they call;  
That they may build from age to age  
An undefiled heritage.

Nietzsche stresses the transmutation of values: Kipling stresses the transmutation of patriotic values. One's native land enlists the deepest impulses of man, and enlists them unreservedly. For the poet can occasionally abandon moral restraint in his patriotic fervour. Besides, a man can readily cheat himself that he is a moral being when he has simply transferred his vices to his class or, above all, his State. "No individual can make a conscience for himself," maintains T. H. Green, "he always needs a society to make it for him." A society or a State

with a lofty ideal will make one kind of conscience, but where do we rank the State pouring contempt upon such an ideal?

It is the invariable duty of the individual to obey his conscience, but is it the invariable duty of the State? In 1896 the Armenian obeyed his conscience when the Turk confronted him with the alternative of apostasy or death. In 1914, as in 1940, the State of Belgium obeyed its conscience when it refused to open its frontiers to the German invaders. Yet we must remember that while the individual dies, the State does not. It is a trustee for posterity, and a trustee cannot surrender an estate which is not his own. That is, biological as well as moral considerations demand attention. The State must survive, though all its friends will wish it to pay due regard to Ethos as well as to Kratos. Kratos urged the devastation of the Palatinate by Louis XIV, the seizure of Silesia by Frederick the Great, the partitions of Poland by Prussia, Russia, and Austria, the wars of Napoleon, the snatching of Tripoli by Italy in 1911, and both the World Wars. In spite of this terrible record, is Kratos all powerful?

In private life feudal anarchy, civil war, highway robbery, and duelling were a matter of course for centuries. They have all disappeared because of the moralisation of private life. Brute force has retreated before the reign of law. The moralisation of public life will of course be a long process of which the end is not yet. Think, however, of the results of its demoralisation as recorded in the pages of Hobbes, as grim a realist as Machiavelli. "No arts; no society; and what is worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death; and the life of man solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short." Such a state of nature appeals to none, yet it is the state into which we have again drifted—and will continue to drift—unless we witness a stop put to the conclusions of Machiavelli and Hobbes, of Hegel and Treitschke. The unity of civilisation, the allegiance of humanity, and joint responsibility for the welfare of the world are the ideals competing with theirs, and through the growth of the community sense and by the creation of institutions in which it finds expression, we have made more progress than is often realised. There is room for anxiety: there is no room for despair. Vittoria and Grotius lived in evil ages. Though they saw the promised land with their eyes, they never entered it. We jump centuries and come to the twentieth. "We are at the beginning of an age," realised Woodrow Wilson in his address to Congress on the declaration of war against Germany in 1917, "in which it will be insisted that the same standards of conduct are observed among nations and their governments that are observed among the individual citizens of civilised States." In this spirit Dr. Benes, at one of the early meetings of the League of Nations, pointed out it was "*ipso facto* an attempt to introduce into international relationships the principles and methods employed . . . in the mutual relations of private individuals." In the spirit of both Woodrow Wilson and Benes, President Roosevelt declared in 1937 that "national morality is as vital as private morality."

Church and State throughout the Middle Ages had been completing divinities: for the first time they become the competing divinities they have been ever since the days of the Florentine. The outline of an alternative presented itself to the men of the closing years of the fourth century. A vigorous outline presented itself to the men of the opening years of the sixteenth century. Many a day was to elapse before the amoral State stood out in all its ethical nakedness, and at first men stood terrified by the sight of its nakedness. Before our generation appear the competing divinities of ethical Churches confronted by unethical States with all that such States mean for the future of civilisation. We in our day see far more clearly than any other the horror of a State which is ruthlessly regardless of any other State. The conclusion that we must at all costs replace the Power State by the Welfare State is inevitable—so far at least as the great nations are concerned—if civilisation is not to perish from the earth. The arrival of the atomic bomb intensifies this conclusion.

The Welfare State demands resources to maintain itself and its position in world affairs. Nevertheless, the gulf between resources utilised to maintain welfare and those utilised to maintain power is so vast as to be unbridgeable. A world continuing to employ these two types of resources will surely find itself plunged in fresh warfare, for freedom for the pike is death for minnows. Any other outcome of the present struggle simply means preparations for another world war in the not distant future. Lord Acton reminds us that "power always corrupts, and absolute power absolutely corrupts." It will be a strange finale for our civilisation if it succumbs to weapons, like the atomic bomb, seized by the have-nots from the haves.

The corruption of the rulers of Berlin, Rome, and Tokio stands out in unmistakable characters as we witness the fierceness with which they struggle to seize control both of the raw materials of the world and of its foodstuffs not so much to afford a more generous diet to workers everywhere as to serve the ends of militarism. How vain are their efforts from their own point of view to command raw materials and foodstuffs for men with master morality is clear from the considered judgment of Professor Brooks Adams. He points out that the richest raw materials of the world are, for the most part, under the dominance of the Anglo-American States. For these two national groups produce almost two-thirds of the industrial output of the world and directly and indirectly regulate three-quarters of its mineral resources, thereby holding a balance of power of alarming import to the rulers of Berlin, Rome, and Tokio, not to mention those of Moscow.

The fight is for material power: it is also for spiritual power. It is, at bottom, due to the denial of State morality. It is our manifest duty, as Burke takes occasion to remind us, "to bring the dispositions that are lovely in private life into the service and conduct of the Commonwealth." Can we forsake such a creed for a belief in *Vox sanguinis vox Dei*? Hear Troeltsch on this matter. "Now, therefore, there abide these three, individual morality, State morality, and cosmopolitan morality, but the

greatest and most important of these at the present time is State morality." While in one sense we agree with Troeltsch, in another we disagree, for fundamentally in the issue these three moralities blend. We can never assent to the doctrine that whatever the State can do is right, and that whatever else it cannot is wrong. "*Ablata justitia*," indignantly asks St. Augustine, "*quid sunt regna nisi magna latrocinia*?" As we assume justice in private relationships, so we must assume it in public—unless the State is a corporation of pirates, brazenly flaunting its skull and cross-bones. "You must," as Field-Marshal Smuts perceives, "begin with the hearts of men," thus restoring private, and therefore, public morality.

## CHAPTER X

### THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE STATE

#### (1) *The Mutations of the Past*

DURING an incalculable procession of centuries the transient generations left no record of themselves, except here and there some bones or a chance heap of rude stones, before man reached an age cognisable to the historian. That age was notably the fifth century B.C. when the Greeks presented us with a new type of civilisation which opened out indefinite possibilities in the way of man's subjugation of the world to his purposes by knowledge and co-operation. This age reached a certain degree of power and splendour in itself and the countries around the Mediterranean. Athens lay at the very heart of this civilisation and greatness. The quest of the Greek, as it is the quest of all of us, was to seek right and ensue it. The right life of the individual was conceivable to Plato and Aristotle only in the rightly ordered State. The ardour with which they served their City-State blurred the sharpness of the conflict between the community and the individual. Disguised as this conflict was, none the less it lay not far below the surface of civic activity. For good and for evil, the forces of the individual had not yet been set free from the powers controlling them. Because of the prophetic strain in his nature, Plato detected these forces which he eagerly sought to turn to the service of the State. The ancient world, like the Middle Ages, tended alike in theory and practice to transform the individual into a bondsman of the State. This world tended to sacrifice the free development of the individual to the interest of the community. The State stood in terror of the individual. The individual in turn stood in terror of the State. Plato held that no true political life could develop without an enslavement of the individual which to Totalitarian thought is tolerable, but to democratic intolerable. Ostracism tells the tale of the jealousy of the State to anyone whose greatness might overshadow it. Is it surprising that the conspicuous man should shrink from the suspicion

and jealousy of the State? This is as plain with Alcibiades as it is with Aristides.

The genius of Rome was too little speculative to allow her to garner the harvest which Plato and Aristotle had left upon the field. She contributed little to the corporate life, less to the individualistic one. Still, she took over the Stoic conception, Greek in origin, of the natural brotherhood of mankind. It was a conception which proved admirably suited to an Empire which embraced the whole civilised world. This conception appealed with peculiar power to the nobler spirits of Rome who saw lying behind this brotherhood the law of nature, binding alike on all, citizen or barbarian. The Stoics transmitted the idea of natural law to the Roman jurists, and through them, thanks to thinkers like Vittoria and Grotius, it has become part of the common heritage of the world. Here lies the germ of that faith in humanity as a collective whole which is waxing in strength in our own generation. It is the raw material out of which international law is the finished product. According to natural law, there is a sense of justice, however rudimentary, in man from the beginning; positive law proceeds and develops from this sense; and the history of society is a record of the action and the interaction between man's inner sense of justice and the outward institutions that embody it. Rome bequeathed to mankind natural law, but she did very much more than even this. For she created a law which still moulds the destinies of Europe. She held up to the world the very idea of law, and she compelled the world to bow down in admiration of it. Hers is the first attempt—it remains the most complete attempt—to formulate a legal code to settle the disputes of man with man, and to repress the force and fraud committed against society itself. Roman law from the second century stands forth as "the living voice of reason" as no law has ever been before. It has stamped upon the conscience of mankind the notion of unwavering uniformity, the notion that law is the same always, everywhere and for all. The Greeks, like the rulers of Totalitarian States, overrode the law by decrees to meet individual cases or serve the end of party faction. Rome proclaimed her scorn of such expedients, and, though they have often been practised since the days of her sway, they have never been adopted without shame.

The tragedy of Rome is that as her city expanded into her Empire, freedom did not keep pace with this expansion. Some of the favoured municipalities showed true signs of corporate existence, but they were few indeed. The Greek city, like the Italian medieval city, exhibits that bitter intensity of the blood feud which Thucydides has recorded for all time. While Roman civic life never manifested the deadly symptoms of stasis to the same degree as ancient Greece or medieval Italy, yet there were signs of it. The allegiance to the City of the Seven Hills was to be replaced by allegiance to the Empire. How were men to effect this transfer? The Empire demonstrates the difficulty they found. Their old civic life was perishing: their new imperial life did not win intensity of devotion. New wine was urgently required. The

barbarians supplied it, bringing with them the notion of nationality. In the fourth century they awakened Europe to new life. Of course this nationality was nascent. It does not begin to exert much effect in Europe till after 1789. None the less, this force, one of the strongest in the modern world, dates its first dim appearance from the irruption of the Teutonic tribes into the old Empire. Nationalism encountered obstacle after obstacle. Save in England, nationality is not a power to be reckoned with till almost the days of the first French Revolution. Dynastic struggles, among the most irrational of all obstacles, stood in its way, perverting its course and hindering its natural growth.

Another great force was Christianity which did not become the State religion till Constantine the Great embraced it in 325. By then it had become as organised as the Empire itself, exhibiting the passive virtues rather than the active. This, however, was inevitable. In the face of these drawbacks, the surprise is not that the Gospel should have borne so little fruit, but that it should have borne so much. On all sides man experienced its civilising and purifying influence. While he realised in his own life how wonderfully it contributed to personal righteousness, he also began to realise something of what it could accomplish for civic justice. None the less, the inward change wrought in man by Christ stood out as the outstanding merit of the new faith. Till its advent the sense of the immutability of the race had proved predominant. The individual is but a moment, scarcely a separate existence. Christianity supplanted this conception by the attitude that right is always right, wrong always wrong, and that the conscience of the individual is the most sacred thing in the universe.

God loves mankind, and all men have a value in His eyes; but the parables of the Sower and of the Talents teach that all men have not precisely the same value. There is a native inequality of spiritual status. There is neither equality of grace nor of response of grace. In a word, Jesus Christ teaches that there is no equality of souls in the sight of His Father. The claim that every human soul has absolutely equal value practically enforces the demand that modern democracy shall be imposed upon that absolute monarchy, the Kingdom of God. There are degrees, marking the decline of the individual soul, and correspondingly of Divine disapproval.

The world would be an incredibly dull place if all nations were exactly alike. The test Christ applies to the Christian is not, What has he achieved? It is rather, What has he tried to achieve? Browning was surely right when he judged that all we aspired to be was the measure of our worth to God. The man with five talents secures five more just as the man with two talents secures two more. Each had exerted himself to the utmost extent of his powers, and each received the same words of praise from the lips of the Master. To the man with the two talents equally with the man with five talents the same gracious words fall from Jesus. Yet the original inequality in distribution of gifts remains. The man with the one talent is not condemned because he had one, but because he made no use of it. The opportunity to make



another talent had been offered to him, and he deliberately refused to take advantage of it. His one gift is taken from him because in truth he never really possessed it, for the test of possession, as it is the test of individuality, is the use made of opportunity.

Christianity stressed the belief in liberty rather than force, in progress rather than retrogression, in justice for each rather than the sway of one over all, and the divine and necessary notions which have evolved the biologist from the bushman. An American thinker, Reinhold Niebuhr, suggests that Christianity pursues individual rather than social ends. Ernst Troeltsch stresses such a suggestion by his emphatic declaration that Christianity is "an unlimited, unqualified individualism. The standard of this individualism . . . is determined simply by its own sense of what will further its consecration of God." He is willing to admit that the nature of the Christian—like the nature of all men—is social, but it is only so as a derivative element. The truth is that Christianity still bears upon it the stamp of the time when it was merely one religion out of the many flourishing in the Roman Empire. It was struggling to exist, and persecution beset its path. How could it conceive of public duty when personal righteousness was what mattered? In time this individualism was transcended by the Christian through his *unio mystica* with God. Once he achieved this union, social existence began to count. Christianity then asked for the natural interpenetration of the individual and the social elements, yet in so asking she demanded priority for the individual rather than for the social. For a long time to come all the responsibility for personal salvation is thrown upon the individual. "One ought," in the judgment of Nicholas Berdyaev, "always to act individually and solve every moral problem for oneself." Man saw himself as capable of his own redemption, through the creative, imaginative gift that derives from the Holy Spirit, the Kingdom of God within him, but he was continually tempted to fall back into the acceptance of rule and convention, due to the mechanising of his faith through the all-pervasive might of the Empire.

## (2) *The Temporal and the Eternal*

The greatest of all the services rendered by Christianity lay in the overwhelming value it bestowed upon the soul of each individual. Constantine could not suspect what a revolutionary change this outlook heralded. The very vastness of the idea forbade that it should be conceived otherwise than by slow stages, and of course its realisation was the task of centuries. The Medieval Church, with restriction and even with distortion, drove home to the mass of men the supreme importance of this cardinal conception. This Church, however, suffered from the attitude that St. Augustine chose to adopt towards the State. Was not the State conceived and born in sin? Was it not the result of the Fall of man? How could a Christian discharge his public duty wholeheartedly towards it? On the other hand, the Church alone stood for

spiritual power. The State was sinful, the Church sinless. The Middle Ages are full of the controversy between Church and State in the broad sense of the term. Who could doubt which side the Christian should favour? The Medieval Church triumphed, and was, under the circumstances, bound to triumph. A change passed over the spirit of the time when men like Dante visualised the State also as a spiritual power. Indeed the struggle forced such a view upon the thoughtful man. The Pope claimed to rule by right divine. In turn, the State must claim to rule by right divine, for the only way in which one divine claim can be met is by another divine claim. The doctrine of the divine right of kings is no creation of the Stuarts. It is medieval in origin, and there is much more to be said for it than is commonly realised. It is the fashion to glorify the Middle Ages, but students of those ages are well aware of the brutality and lawlessness underlying their glitter. *The Paston Letters* reveal the utter lawlessness, for example, of the English, with their bitter employment of the vendetta and their open defiance of the law courts during the last half of the fifteenth century. The Tudor sovereign had scarcely any armed force at his disposal. There were the few Yeomen of the Guard in the Tower of London, and there was little else. There was no regular army, no navy—though Henry VIII is the Father of the English Navy—and, above all, no police. Moral power is always of far greater worth than material. If the King could not enforce the decisions of his courts by armed men in this world, what if he could employ the powers of the unseen? The precept of St. Paul and the practice of centuries had inculcated, with more or less success, the theory of the divine right of kings. It compelled the common man to habits of obedience to royal and legal authority which otherwise might not have been his lot for centuries. Walter Bagehot was once paying a visit to a Somersetshire squire who had just built a church in his grounds. He observed to the squire, "Ah, it's well to teach the peasant that your authority is not confined to this world." The theory of the divine right of kings suggested that the sway of the sovereign was not confined to this world. It also taught that fundamentally all authority is mystical in essence.

The Renaissance ushered in its own view of the place of singular pre-eminence occupied by man. Of this pre-eminence Nicholas Machiavelli was not slow to take advantage. The sovereign might or might not possess supernatural authority. The Italian thinker, for his part, was resolved that the Prince must possess secular authority, and must possess it free from all the restraints imposed by the Church of the Middle Ages. The Reformation ushered in its own view of the place of singular pre-eminence occupied by man. Of this pre-eminence Martin Luther was not slow to take advantage. He was bent on achieving the freedom of the Christian man to worship as his conscience bade him. It was another stage in the prolonged and painful evolution of the individual. Like the Medieval Church, the Reformed Churches applied the freedom of the individual soul, with restriction and with distortion, to the circumstances of the sixteenth century. Misconceptions

and extravagances beset their efforts. The first effect of the Reformation was to bring not peace but a sword.

The Reformers were concerned with their religious labour which bestowed upon the individual a value such as no other age had known. Their chief task had been to lay a stress upon the individual responsibility of the Christian such as had never been laid before. They admitted and gloried in this task. To a man, with the signal exception of Calvin, they concentrated their energies upon Church doctrine and Church government. No one was more surprised than they when the believer asserted his right of private judgment in secular affairs as well as sacred. But the moment they granted the right of private judgment, they granted with it the right to exercise it in all affairs, the affairs of this world as well as those of the next. No power on earth could set a limit to the scope and application of such a right. From the government of the Church to the government of the State was a short step to take, and taken it was. Once admit Luther and Calvin, and it is impossible to shut the door against John Pym and John Milton, against John Locke and the Revolutionists of 1688, not to speak of those of 1776. The Reformation opens a new page in the religious history of Europe: it also opens a new page in the secular history of Europe and North America. The Reformers had flung their gospel of liberty into the hands of the lowly and the oppressed. They hoped to limit it to the world of the unseen. But how could they so limit it? The political order treated the common man as little better than the beast of the field. Is it any matter of surprise that the German peasant, so treated, took the law into his own hands? The Peasants' War and the fleeting supremacy of the Anabaptists at Münster are among the saddest episodes of history. They left the Reformers aghast. Their remedy was to transfer to the civil magistrate, as the Lord's anointed, as much as might be of the mysterious sanctity and divinity they had roughly torn from the Vicar of Christ.

### (3) *The Sacredness of Contract*

The individualistic leaven was at work, and it was leavening the mind of man. The creed of the divine right of kings did not receive its deathblow till the revolution of 1688, but long before that time it was a dying creed. The execution of Charles I, to use the words of James Boswell's father, taught sovereigns that they had "a lith in their neck." Wherever the dying creed of the divine right of kings was rejected, the theory of contract was accepted as that which must inevitably take its place. The belief that the State is founded on a contract between its members became an article of faith with the reformers. This belief was enormously strengthened by the prevailing habit of referring everything to the Old Testament. In its pages they saw the origin of the Jewish State traced to a covenant or contract. The Old Testament contained the old pact of God with *men*; the New Testament contained the new pact of God with *man*. The *pactum subjectionis* on the part of

man rested on voluntary submission, on consent.<sup>7</sup> To the federally-minded Calvin such a conception proved peculiarly attractive. To him the Old Testament resolved itself into the Old Covenant, with the historical development of the contract of God with men. Did He not conclude contracts with the patriarchs, with Adam, Noah, Abraham and others? When Calvin thinks of the individual, the theory of predestination is in his mind. When he thinks of the mass of individuals, the theory of contract is in his mind. Legally speaking, he feels strongly that the pact concluded by God with man differs in degree, not in kind, from that concluded by man with man. How easy the transition was is manifest when we note that as there is a contract between God and men, there is—or, there may be—one between men and men in general, and between men and their Prince in particular. The contract in the Church is the signing the Confession of Faith. What happens explicitly in the Church happens implicitly in the State. The Confession of Faith, 1537, contains a social pact on the lines of what Calvin conceived to be the pacts of the Old Testament. True, it was mainly religious, but those were the days when religion was politics and politics was religion. Is not this contract the precursor of the Scots Covenant, 1638, the English Solemn League and Covenant, 1643, and the covenants of New England?

Calvin takes trouble to show that the implicit attitude in the State is, on consideration, really explicit. Take the choice of Saul as the first King of Israel. Much that is not recorded in Holy Writ appears in the new exegesis. Of the king we learn, with surprise, that the Israelites "agreed to his appointment," that they "approved of his office," that they gave their "good will," that in a solemn assembly they "consented," and that "there was a mutual duty of the Prince towards his subjects." If a man so little carried away by imagination as this exegete could find all this in the sober narrative in 1 Samuel, what did not the dreamer discover in it?

The contract conception so soon dominates the sixteenth century that we meet with it in unexpected places. Richard Hooker was as little of a democrat as John Calvin himself, and the last place we should look for democratic doctrine is in his great book *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. He was an Aristotelian with his feet as firmly planted on mother earth as the great Stagirite's. Hooker investigates the nature of law and the obedience due to it, and in the middle of his subtle argument he unconsciously slips in a consideration containing in germ the theory developed by John Locke a century later. Take the magnificent sentence with which Hooker's first book concludes: "Wherefore that here we may briefly end: of law there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world; all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least feeling her care, and the greatest are not exempted from her power: both angels and men, and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort of manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy." In his *magnum opus*, Hooker

glides into writing the remark, "Laws human, of what kind soever, are available by consent." The hour of contract had struck when so sane an observer as Hooker perceives its place. The strong bias towards individualism implanted by the Reformation had accomplished no small share of its task.<sup>7</sup> The writings of Rabelais and Montaigne afford proofs that the individualistic heaven was working with them as it was with Hooker. Huguenots like François Hotman in his *Franco-Gallia* (1573) and Theodore Beza in his *Du Droit des Magistrats sur leurs Sujets* (1574), Scots Covenanters like John Knox in his *Appellation* (1558) and George Buchanan in his *De Jure Regni apud Scotos* (1579), and a Jesuit like Juan Mariana in his *De Rege et Regis* (1599) analyse different conceptions of contract with the implications they involve.

Normally the philosopher precedes the people in the working out of an idea. With the notion of contract the very reverse takes place. It won popular acceptance before the man of the study dreamed of it. Sound requires an atmosphere before it can be heard. Similarly too the contract conception required the atmosphere which the Reformation provided in full measure. It was an idol of the market-place long before it became an idol of the lecture-room. Men of action devised it as current coin before the men of theory refined it and minted it afresh. How did the new theory of contract come to replace the old theory of the divine right of kings? It replaced it partly because the work of the latter was accomplished, partly because the metaphor of contract seemed to explain what men wanted it to explain. It is the function of the State to combine freedom with restraint, law with liberty. But how can man reconcile these seemingly contrary attitudes? It was a problem for the man of the sixteenth century: it remains a problem for the man of the twentieth. To men familiar with the Old Testament the covenant of God with man, interpreted by a theologian with the ever-growing authority of Calvin, suggested a means of reconciling contrary attitudes. Freedom and restraint, law and liberty—they must be turned into harmony. To the men of the sixteenth, still more to those of the seventeenth, century, the Bible conferred the indefeasible worth of the individual soul and the equality of each man before God. The Reformation had disclosed the strength with which these convictions were to be held, and each generation held them with increasing firmness. The covenant, the contract, suggested the way out of spiritual difficulties: it also suggested the way out of secular difficulties. A man leased a farm or he bought a piece of land, and he did so through the agency of contract. What he did in his own private concerns, he thought he should do in public concerns. The fortune of contract, for good and for ill, in public affairs was made. On the one hand, a man enjoyed perfect freedom in his own life to make or not to make a contract. On the other hand, once made, he was, under the pain of a penalty, obliged to fulfil it. The grave difficulty of conceiving the original foundation of society, based on universal consent, explains the resounding triumph of the theory of contract. As the discontent of the English, in particular, with Stuart rule deepened, so the doctrine that all government was the outcome of a

contract between governor and governed grew in favour with the common man. The theory of the divine right of kings allowed no right of rebellion: the theory of contract lay at the very base of this right. The theory of contract proved a counterblast to the theory of divine right, and came in time to be meant increasingly as a counterblast. It stripped the sovereign of the sanctity, of the mystical majesty, cast around him by seventeenth-century theology. The process of change was slow in France and England, much slower in the former country than in the latter. It was not possible for the theory of contract to spring into influence in any way save through the lapse of time.

#### (4) *The Worthlessness of Contract*

At first sight it might seem as if the contract theory must be democratic. It waited a long time before Hobbes gave it an absolutist turn. The sixteenth-century writers gave it a democratic turn, but Hobbes in his *Leviathan* (1651) reversed it, by a freak of genius, in an autocratic direction. It was, however, only a temporary diversion of its main trend. Spinoza and Locke powerfully pulverised the Hobbeian interpretation, and the latter in his *Two Letters on Civil Government* restored the main direction. Individualism was triumphantly vindicated, and held its sway till Vico first dealt it a resounding blow. Under the influence of individualism Rousseau began his *Contrat Social* (1762). He speedily forgot its opening and turned it into a winning apologia on behalf of the State. With the appearance of this book the history of the doctrine of contract comes abruptly to an end.

The history of the influence of theory of contract was strange. By his adoption of it Hobbes turned the individual into the slave of the State. Locke transformed the individual into the master of the State, and once again Rousseau left him the servant of the State. Its practice proved no less startling. The Puritan adoption of it precipitated the conflict between Cavalier and Roundhead, and it proved the decisive factor in "the great and glorious" Revolution of 1688, for James II lost his throne because of his adherence to the Hobbeian conception of sovereignty. What the Englishmen of 1643 realised on the outbreak of civil war and what they realised in 1688 when they declared the throne of James II vacant, their descendants on the other side of the Atlantic no less keenly realised in 1776. The colonists had contracted out of the jurisdiction of Parliament because they had "compacted" with the king. They earnestly urged the charters, the contracts, of the English sovereigns, their rights as individual Englishmen, the liberties they inherited from the Roman law of nature, and the writings of such English philosophers as Richard Hooker and John Locke. The Declaration of Independence stoutly set forth that "governments derived their just powers from the consent of the governed." The importance of the contract conception and the share of the citizens in agreeing to it are manifest.

The sixteenth, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries accepted the conception of contract as the solution of the relationship existing between the individual and the State. The advantages of this conception were so outstanding that it scarcely occurred to anyone to query its worth. Let us ask a few questions. Can primitive man, whether he is in a state of nature or not, conceive the idea of a contract? Does not this idea belong to a late stage in the history of jurisprudence? Is not the ascription of the origin of the State to contract an assumption of the very thing we seek to prove? In fact, is not the idea of contract an outstanding instance of putting the cart before the horse? The moment one asks such questions, the answers are apparent. Yet if anything was wanted to demonstrate the readiness with which contract met a long-felt need, it is the fact that no one ever dreamt of inquiring if it were a fact of history or a figment of the imagination.

The head of man shows the worthlessness of contract: the heart of man shows its worth. For it effected a complete revolution in the attitude of the individual to the State. How could he rest content with the old idea of everything for the people but nothing by the people? His deeply religious being revolted against the view that the Government was to be active and he merely passive. Men like him constituted the State, and surely they were entitled to a share in its tasks. The common man realised this: so too did the educated man, familiar with the history of Greece and Rome. The strength of the republics of antiquity lay in the devotion with which every citizen felt himself to be a living and working partner of the very being of the State. Instead of passive obedience there must be active co-operation on the part of each. Instead of a cunningly devised machine called contract there must be a live organism, growing and developing with the powers each communicated to it. It was of course generations before this view, faintly adumbrated at first, became anything like the reality with which the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries were to transform it. The moment the contract conception received its deathblow, such a possibility turned into a probability, and then into the practicability our generation is witnessing.

The merits of the contract theory are all on the surface for anyone to see. The rights of the individual stand out with an unforgettable prominence. Locke beholds him simply as an aggregate of other individuals who agree to act together for certain specified and limited purposes, reserving their primitive freedom in all other respects. The State is, therefore, nothing better than a Limited Liability Company with neither a soul to be saved nor a body to be kicked. The real sovereignty resides in the individual who can do as he pleases. There is nothing to prevent the State dissolving into as many petty bodies as the caprice of the citizen may suggest. The rights of the individual are jealously remembered: his duties are no less jealously forgotten.

The demerits of the contract theory lie beneath the surface for few to see. As the powers of the State are contracted, those of the individual correspondingly expand. The bestowal of unlimited power on the

individual is, in the long run, the mastery, the tyranny, of the strong over the weak, the rich over the poor. The State exists to control such mastery, to keep it within bounds. If instead of checking it, the State tacitly sanctions and even encourages it, then it is false to the trust the citizen has committed to its hands. The truth is that the sheer individualism of the contract theory strips the State of all moral functions. Its business is simply to prevent its citizens from picking each other's pockets and flying at each other's throats. The State, in a word, is nothing other than anarchy plus the policeman.

### (5) *The Weaknesses of Individualism*

The strength of the contract idea is the strength—and the weakness—of individualism. It conceives the individual as apart from, and prior to, any form of society. He is prior to society, for how can you form a society save by the free consent of those who abandon the state of nature, as imagined by Locke, for the purpose of common association? Even then the individual is apart from society, for he still retains rights of which his fellow contractors cannot deprive him. Besides, these rights are so far-reaching as to cover the whole of the activities of the individual. He leaves to the State the merest fraction of his manifold existence: all else absolutely belongs to him. The powers of the State are rigorously limited: the powers of the individual are rigorously unlimited. We are asked to contemplate the individual prior to and apart from society. How can we possibly do so? We might, if we please, from this angle of approach see his soul, as Hobbes saw it, swept by "continual fear and danger of violent death," his life "solitary, poor, brutish and short." In truth, it is as a member of the community we know the individual, and as that alone. The man, who is as unsocial and as naked as Cain is supposed to have been, has never really existed. His home, his school, his profession, and his religion stamp upon him qualities which have been cast into a mould by his particular race, his particular social order, and his particular polity, and these all constitute his individuality. This attitude is as obvious in Aristotle as it is in Burke. "Man is by nature a political animal. . . . By nature the State is prior to the individual." These influences surround man from the day he is born to the day he dies, and they are as inescapable as the air he breathes. Domestic, religious, educational, occupational, patriotic, and political powers are incessantly at work busily engaged in altering the character of the individual, transforming him into the being we know.

In spite of the contract conception, the moment we try to trace the history of man to the most distant antiquity we find him, in one form or another, a member of a community, a tribe. That community may be large or small, barbarous or civilised, the tribe or the city. But under every guise, large or small, barbarous or civilised, country or city, it is still a community, and it is as a member of that community that the individual presents himself. Locke conceived the mind of man to be



a blank sheet of paper, and we shrewdly suspect that he similarly regarded the individual as bare, naked, unexposed to social pressure, social tradition, and, above all, social religion. There is no general moral law without, no particular conscientious scruples within. He is independent and isolated among his fellows. What is the worth of such a conception? Historically, it is worthless. Historically, it wrought untold evil when *laissez-faire* came to be a logical deduction of the contract theory. The horrors revealed by the Factory Law commissions are more than sufficient to demonstrate the iniquities exposed as the outcome of thoroughgoing individualism.

How are we to account for the prevalence of the belief in the divine right of kings? It is not enough to ridicule it, as Macaulay did, for this ridicule does not account for the fact that this belief prevailed for century after century. Clearly, it supplied a want in public life—the mystical view of obedience to authority—and because it supplied this want, it persisted. How are we to account for the prevalence of the belief in the contract conception? It offered manifest advantages. For the individualism of the contract theory bears the strongest testimony to the importance of will, energy, and initiative on the part of man. On the religious side, the Reformation had insisted on the value of the soul of each man. On the commercial side, it had no less insisted on the value of the body of each man. Vocation applied to all aspects of life. The Reformation pressed such demands on the life of man that it tended to leave him exhausted by his efforts to embrace it. It is a law of mechanics that to every action there is an equal and opposite reaction: it is also a law of life. Feverish activity and exalted hope impose the sense of lassitude which is so familiar a phenomena of history. The depth of the reaction is proportional to the activity and hope which has preceded it. Thucydides puts into the mouth of Pericles the magnificent panegyric which stands in poignant contrast with the lament of Demosthenes a century later for the lack of those very qualities which the historian accounts as the special endowment of his countrymen. The moral earnestness and the religious fervour of the Puritans stand out: so too does the reaction of the Restoration attest the price paid for their rule. The energy, the enterprise, and the initiative of the individual were sorely required in the England and the Thirteen Colonies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: the price paid for them was the working of *laissez-faire* in the nineteenth.

The employer for a while emancipated himself from the moral and social standards around him in the name of that free and unlimited competition that his individualism demanded. His rights were absolute and indefeasible as much as ever John Bright or Richard Cobden imagined. They were their own masters, uncontrolled by checks from without—though controlled by checks from within. They were good men in private life, none better, but, little as they realised it, their public life was dominated by an obsolete conception of public right. Man is not his own master: he is limited by a thousand barriers external and internal. Human and physical barriers stand in his way; so too do

moral and conscientious barriers. From without he is limited by positive law and that social custom which is far stronger than positive law. From within he is limited by the moral law, by his conscience, by an ingrained sense of obligation to others. For a time the rights of the individual were identical with his powers, and the outcome of this in early nineteenth century England produced a spectacle from which the whole world shrank. The truth is that now the rights of the individual are no longer identical with his powers. The contract conception has at last been definitely superseded. Man is, however slowly, becoming a moral being with membership in a civil order. In the former capacity through religion he imposes laws upon himself. In the latter he accepts the sanctions of the State on those inner laws, and binds himself to obey the laws the State imposes. The individual accepts liberty which must never degenerate into licence.

"(6) *The Winning of True Individualism*

No one had laid more stress on conscience than Kant, for the moral law within moved him as deeply as the heavens without. Conscience, however, had been regarded almost as a blank sheet of paper on which man might write what he pleased. Men like Burke revealed that conscience was no law unto itself, but that it owed its specific character, its determinate form, to the unconscious working of the practical instinct, the common sense of the community. This new conception of conscience was among the forces weakening individualism. For it showed that the State could not be the residuary legatee of whatever rights the individual might bequeath to it. On the contrary, the State was the body that clothed a lifeless abstraction with life and with liberty. Locke and even Rousseau had devised a *tabula rasa* out of which they proceeded to create the individual: Burke and Hegel demonstrated that his noblest qualities came from the historical past and the administrative present. In a word, the State was no longer a cold abstraction, but a living reality enabling man to participate in all the deepest interests of human existence.

The insufficiency of the individual is written all over his history. He is unable to provide for himself more than the bare necessities of life. He is condemned to an intellectual and moral vacuity. Despite this attitude, his powers are rigidly restricted by the community and his ability to act as he pleases steadily undergoes a process of curtailment.

The growth of his faculties and his sense of security depend on the stability of the State, and they increase his powers and his rights which are more real than ever John Locke or John Bright imagined. Man casts his seed into the ground: the State determines the manner of its growth. He shapes his ends as best he can: the State also shapes them as best it can. His material existence, as Plato long ago insisted, depends at every moment upon the help of his neighbours. His intellectual and moral instincts take no little of their form and substance from their beliefs and customs. The State, Hegel argues, is not formed by a grant of arbitrarily selected powers from the citizen, but by his taking up into

himself the whole circle of his life. It is not the least of his splendid services that he insists on the sheer impossibility of a purely individual morality, and that he demonstrates Kant's failure to establish it. While in some measure believing that the Kingdom of Prussia is the Kingdom of Heaven, Hegel performed a notable task when he insisted that man is inseparable from the State, and that man cannot create an individual morality.

Man is part and parcel of the community, the State. As the community gains a fresh step, in power and potency if not in actuality, he also gains a step. Man unites in himself a private and a public element in his character. The more free scope he allows to the public element, the more he outwardly progresses, and the more keenly does he sharpen his faculties inwardly. True freedom is never licence to act without law. It is the ingrained habit of acting according to law, the law which our conscience agrees, the law which our reason apprehends, writ large by the commands of the State. So regarded, the rights of man are his duties. They are a prize which he has to win by merit, a privilege for which he has to qualify by creating the presumption that he is worthy of its exercise. The only true freedom, in the judgment of Spinoza, is that which comes when man has won for himself the power—and when that power has become a restraining habit—of “acting according to the law of his own nature,” the law of “virtue or perfection.” Such a citizen enters into the wider life of the community, appropriating to himself all that this life can freely bestow upon him. The corporate life of the State brings blessing to him: it may also bring a curse—if it stifles the individual, if it endeavours to reduce the outstanding man to the level of the rest. Besides, not a little of the life of the individual must necessarily remain outside the ken of the State. The period of infancy and youth, the formative years of the future man, his transactions with his neighbours—and they are many—unregulated by positive law, the private bodies to which he voluntarily belongs, the broad field of thought and opinion, of speech and writing—all these stand outside the intimate concern of any State caring for the wise and wide development of the citizens composing it.

### (7) *The Ideal Community*

The moralisation of the State is as important as the moralisation of the citizen. We may, if we like, reduce the State to be merely the guardian of life and property. We may strip it of all moral aims, and pay the price in the ultimate demoralisation of the citizen. How can he love, or even respect it? How can he feel that it enlists his passions in its service? How can he believe that it is a quickening and controlling force upon his soul? “To make us love our country,” declared Burke, “our country ought to be lovely.” Can it be so when much that appeals to the higher nature of man is withdrawn from its scope? Practically, too, the consequences are grave. If a man notes the State renouncing all care for the welfare of its members, the poor as well as

the rich, the employed as well as the employer, he will gradually accustom himself to the application of the same standard in his own personal affairs. Has such a State ever existed? Not perhaps a State that renounces all care, yet England suffered with grave severity such a renunciation. It began to exist when A. Smith published *The Wealth of Nations* in 1776 and it lasted almost to 1870 when an orthodox political economist like J. E. Cairnes dared for the first time to denounce *laissez-faire*. Whether it will or no, the State sets a standard for the conduct of men. If its standard is high, that of its citizens tends to become higher, and vice versa. The justice administered in theory by the Law Courts is perhaps the minimum of social justice: in practice, it tends to become the maximum. The average man is content if he does not greatly fall below it. It is only the few who strive to raise themselves above it. The Church is the mint of moral values, the arbiter of right and wrong. The State too is a mint of moral values, which may or may not powerfully reinforce those of the Church. It is, none the less, clear that where the State is unmoral, the Church tends to sink into sheer individualism with all the injury it inflicts upon its corporate life. It is also clear that where the State is moral, it contributes to the ethical rearmament of the Church. It is of the essence of the Church that Christian life should be diffused among its members; that every one of them should contribute his share, large or small, to the activity of the whole. It is no less of the essence of the true State. To the Church its member is active or he is nothing; and the Church which should consist of robots would be no Church at all. To the State its citizen is active or he is nothing; and a State which should consist of robots would be no State at all. The State, like the Church, has everything to gain by "the liberty of prophesying"; and when once the world learns this ever-old, ever-new lesson, the worst of the troubles of mankind will have been cut off at its source.

The life of man has its roots deep down in the past. The State has its roots no less deep in the past. It surrounds man from his birth with traditions, customs, and institutions which, unconsciously but none the less surely, mould his character, his will, and his whole outlook, in the present. The Church supplies the inward spirit: the State supplies the outward organisation. No revolution, secular or sacred, enables men to break away from the past. The Germany of Hitler is not assuredly essentially different from the Germany of Bismarck: it is of course more complete in its *Weltanschauung*, more unified in its organisation. The Russia of Stalin is not assuredly essentially different from that of Nicholas II: it is of course more complete in its *Weltanschauung*, more unified in its organisation. Both States are seeking to break away from their religious past. The future will reveal the degree of success or failure they achieve. None the less, both States are right in their endeavour to de-Christianise themselves, for they cannot fully accomplish their aims so long as the belief in the independent and eternal value of every soul persists, to support the moral and intellectual independence of every individual.

It is the task—as it is the duty—of each generation to form its own judgment on the heritage it receives from history. Truth is unchanged, but the aspects of it are continually changing, and changed aspects of unchanged truth constitute no unfit summary of our attitude to the past. But to assume that such a heritage is incapable of alteration is to deny in the present the creative power rightly accorded to the past: it is treason to the Holy Spirit. It is the certain prelude to decay and death, and the no less certain arrest of all growth worthy of the name.

Sir Henry Maine explores the ever-varying heritage bequeathed by history, and reaches back on its dim beginnings in his own illuminating fashion. His standpoint is broadly philosophic, his style dignified. You are borne along the current of time, with this lucid and just spirit by your side, upholding and instructing you. Beside you is the patriarchal system, the village community, the feudal system, the aristocracy, the State in the shape of the monarchy, the democracy, the clash of races, the rise and fall of social systems, the conflict of nascent nationalities. Serene you float above them all, and ever as the panorama unrolls itself, the weighty measured unemotional voice whispers the true meaning of the scene into your ear.

The rise and fall of the tribe of antiquity, of the guild and of the friar of the Middle Ages, testify in different fashion to the growth of a form of association. The totalitarian classical State disliked such association as much as the modern totalitarian State. In spite of this dislike, the spirit of association finds expression in form. The Guild, the Society, the Trade Union of our time bear witness to the undying nature of this spirit. The Bank and the Limited Liability Company bear witness to that growth of the industrial corporation which Mr. Justice Holmes regards as the greatest invention of the nineteenth century. All these associations possess their traditional policy, their collective atmosphere, and their corporate sentiment. Greatest of all corporations are the Churches, founded for profounder and more spiritual purposes. Their corporate life leaves their member a cog in a vast network of wheels and bands, but a cog that counts. The Churches will accord the humble believer his due place; they will accord also his due place to the man of eminent spiritual ability, the superman, for religious genius is every whit as rare as any other form of genius. None the less, they can entertain no conception of master morality or of herd morality. In the eyes of God it is not possible to dichotomise morality. There is one moral code binding on all alike. From another point of view, the conceptions of master and herd morality work sheer destruction. Just as we saw that the Law Courts set a practical minimum of moral standards, so the conception of herd morality sets a similar minimum, and in the ultimate issue destroys master morality by substituting for it herd morality. God is the author of all that makes life of permanent value to man, the associations to which he belongs, the Church of which he is a member, and the State of which he is a citizen. As Horace Bushnell put it, the soul of all improvement is the improvement of the soul.

The morality of Church and State alike depends on the morality of the members composing both. Let every one contribute his share to the elevation of this morality, and Church and State will in turn be able to soar closer to the transmutation of the ideal into the real. State and Church are no powers which impose themselves from without; on the contrary, they are more part of the individual than the individual himself. Work a change in the wholehearted activity of man, and you at the same time work a corresponding change in the Church as in the State. You can throw the bureaucratic machinery, which is fastening with increasing rapidity upon mankind, to the winds. In the Church we witness such machinery in committees and ever more committees, reports and ever more reports, often put to the one side unread. In the State we witness such machinery in departments and ever more departments, commissions and ever more commissions. Let us for a moment suppose in Church and State a free community in which each member has as much his due share in determining the general policy as any of his fellows; in which, so far as human frailty allows, the general policy adopts and takes to itself the finest in all the particular policies; and what a prospect opens upon the world. It is an ideal, perhaps never wholly attainable, and yet it is astonishing what the individual can accomplish—if all his powers were enthusiastically invoked. Voltaire put into the mouth of Louis XIV the famous words, *L'Etat, c'est moi*. If the individual could purge himself as much as may be of all selfish interests, if he could be persuaded to say—and to mean what he says—*L'Etat, c'est moi*, miracles would take place once more.

The ideal of Cavour was a free Church in a free State. Our ideal is a free citizen in a free State. The two ideals are closely joined together, for without a free Church there cannot be a free State, and without the freedom of both institutions there cannot be a free man. Vico condemned the individualist State for all time when he termed it a society of hucksters. But all States are no more than societies of hucksters—unless they are endowed with a moral purpose. God orders the course of history; but He orders it through the natural needs and impulses He has implanted in man from the beginning. The Greek, under divine guidance, set forth the ideal of the right life in the rightly ordered State; the Roman the ideal of administration and law as the voice of reason; the friar the ideal of community life; the Reformation the ideal of individuality; and the Contract conception the ideal of the powers of the individual at the expense of those of the State. The rise of science and the growth of nationality also were ordered by the decree of Providence, which, nevertheless, cannot be altogether responsible for man's misuse of science and nationality. In spite of everything, the ebb and flow, there has been progress but by no means uninterrupted. The sense of individual freedom and the sense of nationality are, under the guidance of God, transforming man's activities, tending

To cast the kingdom old  
Into another mould.

The free State recognises the sovereignty of the people. Its free citizen does not enjoy mere freedom from restraint: he enjoys the release of bondage to his baser self. With this negative aspect of his life he combines a positive, for he willingly accepts burdens for the sake of others. The Golden Rule of Christianity is the guiding motive of his existence. His service is to a larger whole, the Church and the State, in which alone he finds his true self, his real freedom. In a word, it is a moral freedom, bringing with it as much self-sacrifice as ease. Politically speaking, it is a return to the inspiring ideal of the Greeks and of their master spirit, Plato. Religiously speaking, it is a return to the inspiring ideal of Christ.

The man of the first century stood in terror of the invisible forces surrounding him. The man of the twentieth century stands in similar error though these forces assume a visible character. Among them in peace are the feeling that he is too old at forty, and that he incurs the risk of permanent unemployment. Among them in war are poison gas, the flying rocket and the atomic bomb. The individual shrinks from his helplessness in peace and war, the growing threat to the social order in which he lives, moves and has his being due to the operation of the blind, incalculable, remorseless, senseless forces created as the outcome of rationalisation and mechanisation.

#### (8) *The Free State and the Free Church Interdependent*

Naturally the free State must enjoy its right to live its own life, utterly unhampered by outside interference. This outward independence betokens inward independence. This inward independence involves the life of the community as a vital organism, each one of whose parts acts and reacts on the others. This corporate life results in something very different from the mere aggregate of the lives of the individuals composing it. It is even very different from the corporate life which shapes itself in any or all of the associations within its limits. The spirit of the age moulds the citizen no less than the spirit of the Church moulds the believer. The corporate spirit is also at work in both institutions. Its subtle spirit, under yet subtler forms, is constantly altering and shaping the individual by every fresh turn of sacred or secular experience, adapting his judgment as each fresh situation presents itself, subjecting him to public opinion as well as to private judgment, which surrounds him as the air he breathes. Such an attitude means many things. It means, for instance, an intensity of civic duty which perhaps the average German realises more acutely than the average member of a democratic State. The recognition of duty, based on morality, is the creation of the Church, and without such recognition neither Church nor State can last. It is among the noblest gifts offered by Church and State. The Church, leavened by this spirit, deserves the name of free. The State, leavened by this spirit, also deserves the name of free. In the past the Church has concerned herself far more with a free Church than with a free State, and she has done so with ultimate loss to both

institutions. Christianity has been far too much the religion of the individual. The instinct of the Christian has been to look with indifference, or even hostility, upon the work and aims of the State. The last generation or two has witnessed a significant change coming over the temper of religion. While still caring for the salvation of his soul, the Christian is increasingly interested in the salvation of other souls. While still caring for the progress of his city, the Christian citizen is increasingly interested in the progress of other cities. From kin to kind is becoming his rule of life.

It may be surprising but is certainly true that the virtues which are continuously preached to each generation are precisely those which it already possesses in the greatest abundance. The ages of faith, like the Middle Ages, preach the need of faith; the ages of reason, like the eighteenth century, preach the need of reason; and the ages of Socialism, the twentieth century, preach the need of Socialism. There was probably never a time when the thought of God, the consciousness of His presence, and the claims of His service were so common among the people of England and North America, whether Puritan or Anglican, as in the seventeenth century; and these were the very subjects with which all the pulpits rang. So to-day because the "service of man" is the pre-occupation, almost the passion, of our generation, that is the one virtue to the exclusion of all others which is incessantly urged upon us by our preachers, both lay and clerical. What is new in our social situation is not its evils but our consciousness of them and our determination to remove them. Even in many of the churches the calls for faith and reverence and the love of God, for truth and honesty, and humility and meekness—nay, even for Pauline charity—are almost silent before, the insistent claims of social service. Yet it is quite certain that neither faith nor hope nor charity has increased in at all the same proportion. Herein lies the strength—as well as the weakness—of Socialism.

The cross current of Socialism and the cross current of nationality, not to speak of the issues raised through the instrumentality of science, have complicated the ceaseless struggle between the individualistic and the corporate conception of the State in countless ways. None the less, no matter how protean the form the struggle wears, it always comes back to the relationship of man to the State or, if you will, the Church. The new elements, like the old, can take their part in the soul and the substance of Church and State. After all, neither the individual nor the community, secular and sacred, can work independently of the other. The attempts to mark off their separate spheres are all arbitrary in their nature. If the individual finds the sense of duty imprinted on his heart, this is largely because the Church for untold generations has insisted upon his duty towards his God and towards his neighbour. She never mentions his rights towards either. If the State enforces its laws, it is because such theories as that of the divine right of kings or of contract have driven home a sense of law-abidingness which is of incalculable worth. In the background of all this lies the obligation due to religion.



(9) *False Representative Government*

The historian may, if he pleases, discriminate the share taken by the individual in the past and that taken by the State, and, as we wish to grasp the inner significance of these matters in the present, it is well worth his while to do so. It is, however, infinitely more important to remember that the two are indissolubly dependent each on the other. Their attempted divorce empties each of much of their meaning. The amoralism of the individual is the amoralisation of the State just as the amoralisation of the State is the amoralisation of the individual. The exclusive creed of the individual cribs, cabins, and confines the life of the State. The exclusive creed of the State cribs, cabins, and confines the life of the individual. Neither the conscience of the individual nor the conscience of the State is sufficient to indicate the law of God and of truth. Taken singly, they are often inaccurate; taken together, they are often accurate. God speaks in the conscience of the individual as He speaks in the conscience of the State, but unless we can hear His voice in both, we may well be misled. Agreement between the individual and the State is not a real test. A generation, a century, may elapse before the cry of conscience is raised against an accepted opinion. Agreement between Hitler and Germany simply proves nothing.

The difference between morals and politics is obvious. In the former conscience counts, in the latter expediency. Such a rough-and-ready dichotomy must take into account how immeasurably good will weighs in politics, how little it weighs in morals. In matters of individual conduct, long experience, guided by religion, enables an honest man to arrive at a right decision. Save to the casuist, the cases of doubt are but few in number. On the other hand, who can in politics chart the seas of expediency? The imposition or the repeal of a tax may well be a matter for the official to balance the advantages and the disadvantages thereof. A Grenville may weigh the worth of a Stamp Act on the Thirteen Colonies, but how could he foresee the ultimate results of his measure? A revolution in France as well as in America was among them. A Peel may repeal Corn Laws, but who could foresee the ultimate results of the decline of agriculture in England consequent on the cultivation of the prairie land of the United States with the improved means of transport for carrying the grain to its shores? In these two matters motives of expediency proved the deciding factors. It turned out to be that the imponderabilia of each situation were vitally more important than mere expediency. What is true of Grenville and Peel is of course far truer of Napoleon and Bismarck. Advocates of *Real-Politik*, both men set in the first place their conceptions of material power or of that other delusion, national greatness. Napoleon placed his trust in his army, and, at the first real check to it, his fabric melted into air. Bismarck trusted in national greatness or rather in a false ideal of it. He fell, and to-day his countrymen are paying the price not only in their defeat in two World Wars but in their loss of true national greatness at the hands of Hitler.

The similarity of morals and politics is obvious. Conscience counts in both. Questions of expediency are hard to solve—if we neglect moral considerations. Directly we take them into account, they not seldom prove comparatively simple. Political questions are undoubtedly intricate, but their intricacy is not increased when conscience emerges as a factor. According to Euclid, a straight line is the shortest distance between two points, and in politics this frequently turns out to be the case. Ignoble schemings, the force and fraud of Bismarck and Napoleon, have not performed the successful issue they promised. The truth is that Machiavellian twists and turns make so great a demand upon the human brain that it is impossible for it to foresee their outcome. The moves, seen and unseen, are too complex for a Machiavelli, a Napoleon and a Bismarck combined. The refined and subtle reasonings of expediency are beaten by “a few strong instincts and a few plain rules,” beaten, in fact, by the rules of morality.

The individual is moral and political. He is moral and he brings his morality to the assistance of the government of which he forms a constituent part. But does our representative government really represent? In an important American book, *The New State*,<sup>1</sup> which has not yet come into its own, though published in 1918, Miss M. P. Follett contends that it cannot because its aim is wrong. The proper aim of government is not to produce a harmony or compromise between individuals, as they are, whether by representation or by any other means; for the simple reason that the individual has not yet been achieved. The English-speaking races have spent no little time, thought, and trouble in the search for this singularly elusive man. In so far as they have surpassed other nations religiously and politically, it is because they have sought for him, believed in him, encouraged him; but still they have not found him; and if they give up the search they will lose their religious and political genius with their religious and political aim. Representative government has been an effort to achieve the individual, but, Miss Follett asks, has it achieved its object? She doubts it, and we reproduce her doubts on what she terms the “ballot-box democracy” she roundly condemns.

Psychology tells us more and more clearly that the self is not born, but made. As the aim of life is to achieve it, so the aim of government is also to achieve it. But the self is not achieved in solitude; men become themselves only in a right relation with other men, which is not a relation of self-abnegation, but rather one of self-realisation in a common will, such as Rousseau imagined. Now the notion underlying our present system of government, in London or Washington, is that this common will exists, that it is the will of the majority, and that therefore it can be delegated, handed over like a parcel of goods, to representatives. But according to the new psychology the common will does not exist, is not the will of the majority, but has to be achieved, like the self, by common action. It is not the result of compromise, of any emptying

<sup>1</sup> My edition has an appreciative introduction by Lord Haldane.

process; it is not a least common denominator, but rather the result of enrichment. It is not the common will till all concerned will it; and they can only do this by being members of a group or fellowship engaged in common action.

If we suppose, as we do, that each man already is himself and has his will, there is nothing for it but to attain a common will by compromise, that is to say, by majority government; that this necessarily means that the majority will delegate its will to some kind of representatives, whether members of Parliament or Congress or a despot or an oligarchy; further, it means that this common will must be emptied of a great part of the real, particular, wills of individuals. If we assume that we know what we want, we must also assume that we shall receive very little of what we want. In fact, what happens is seldom what any one of us does want. It is enfeebled and travestied by the process of representative government. At one end goes in a mass of appetites and instincts, hopes and fears, most of them never formulated; at the other end comes out acts of government which we resent as the results of representation yet thoroughly unrepresentative. They are, as Miss Follett hints, like a composite photograph, in which the characters of the individuals are not combined, but cancelled; and, worse than that, they often express some private appetite or purpose which in the process of representation has found its way into the mixture and mastered it against the will of the voters. What is achieved is not even a faint compromise, but something desired only by individuals whose desires have never been before the electorate at all. Such is the outcome of the notion that we have already our wills, which we can achieve more or less by the process of representation. Since we have not yet our wills, what we do achieve is some individual will, which we should all repudiate if it were presented to us at an election.

#### (10) *A Related Society of Groups*

Those who, like Nietzsche and Hitler, dislike democracy are always calling it government by the herd. Miss Follett admits that government by the herd exists, but declares it is not democracy, because the herd never really govern. Its process is not delegation at all, but surrender, whether to the elected members or to a despot. She sharply distinguishes between the herd and the group.<sup>1</sup> The herd exists by nature; the group, like the individual, has to be achieved. In the herd the self does not exist: in the group we realise it. The herd has no common will, but lies at the mercy of mass suggestion: the aim of the group is to find its common will. It is the difference, which we ignore at our peril, between the subconscious and the super-conscious, between the pack at the beck and call of its instincts and so of anyone who can play on them, and the orchestra which completely expresses a common will, value, passion, better than any individual member of it could. Suggestion is the law

<sup>1</sup> This conception has nothing fundamentally in common with the Oxford Group Movement.

of the crowd, interpenetration of the group. Interpenetration takes place by the harmonising of difference. She suggests, Give *your* difference, welcome *my* difference, unify *all* difference in a larger whole. Herein lies the law of growth, attaining unity but attaining it by variety. Individuality consists in finding my place in the whole: "my place" gives us the individual, "the whole" gives you society, but by connecting them, by saying "my place in the whole" we acquire a fruitful synthesis. I contribute to society my mite, and then society contains not just that much more nourishment, but as much more as the loaves and fishes which fed the multitude outnumbered the original seven and two. My contribution meets some particular need not because we can measure it off against that need, but because my contribution by means of all the cross currents of life always has so much more than itself to offer. Accordingly, if I withhold my contribution, I am withholding far more than my personal share, a frame of mind deepening the sense of personal responsibility. In fact to her an individual is one who is being created *by* society, whose daily breath is drawn *from* society, whose life is spent *for* society. From one angle we thereby surrender our individuality: from another we claim our individuality, the one essential demand we make on the universe. The free man is he who wins freedom through fellowship. The individual does not surrender his will: he contributes his will to the collective will.

Miss Follett proceeds to argue that the crowd deadens thought because it seeks immediate action, which means an unthinking unanimity, not a genuine collective piece of thinking. The group stimulates such thinking through the creative power it sets free. The crowd does not tolerate difference: the group tolerates it. The crowd seeks unison: the group seeks harmony. The crowd does not allow choice: the group allows it, for choice is vital to progress. The crowd submerges and smothers the individual: the group releases and enriches his personality. So democracy would reach its true end if men willed and acted in groups—not one group or one kind of groups, but many, in the fashion, say, of the true Franciscan fraternities. For nothing is more dangerous than a group with a group will, with group intelligence, and with group passion, unrelated to other groups. Before 1914 and since 1933 Germany has been ruled by a group and derived her strength from that fact; but that group, being truly unrelated, was itself a conspiracy against the rest of mankind, including even the German people. Yet, because it was a group and not merely a herd, it almost conquered the rest of mankind with their herd methods and herd policies. What is needed then, if groups are not to be conspiracies and tyrannies, is a society of groups all related to one another, every one becoming a member, not of one group, but of many, each with its own purpose, its own size, and its own technique.

It is vital that the individual should participate in the working of the group or groups, for in this participation he finds his true self and he loses his apathetic attitude to society. In the absence of the group conception he and his fellows are not likely to revolt: they are far more

likely to turn cynically indifferent to the claims of Church or State. Under these circumstances he and they will always fall a victim to any Führer who meets him with a plausible or even an unplausible slogan. Given some property, however small, the individual of this common type is anxious to join a group—though he requires guidance. The Friendly Societies attest how he craves for companionship and through these Societies he holds considerable funds. Often personally he exercises more power through them than through his Trade Union. There he is as apt to leave control to the Trades Union officials as the shareholder in Industrial Companies leaves control to his directors. The Trade Unionist and the shareholder are not genuinely functioning in the groups to which they belong. What is distressing for the outlook of the Trade Unionist is that employment to-day demands an automatic and mechanical worker, not an able one, and this new type of workman turns out an infinitesimal share of an article with maximum productivity and efficiency. Mass production is what really matters, and a robot replaces, say, a skilled and self-respecting engineer. The change is momentous, fraught with the gravest consequences to the worker, who is no longer an individual in society but an easily replaceable cog in an inhuman efficient machine. At forty he may become an Ishmael without standing in society, without work inside his Trade Union.

Mill noted in 1854 that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance. Italy and Germany refused to pay this price, and they fell into the hands of the Dictators. The truth is that the maintenance of this vigilance constitutes the weightiest burden the citizen can bear, and he, for the most part, prefers security to freedom. The Grand Inquisitor, described by Dostoevsky, believed that man would rather be a happy slave than a responsible freeman, and the history of Russia, as well as of Germany and Italy, demonstrates the correctness of this belief. Power politics cannot allow political freedom. If this freedom rests merely on "ballot-box democracy" it ultimately fails: if it rests on functioning groups, related to one another, it remains secure. For it provides a competing authority to Church and State when it develops the social status and the common duties of its member.

For Pluralism Miss Follett has no mercy because its advocates cannot harmonise diverse attitudes. Does pluralism lose the individual in the group? Does it abandon the State for the group? It provides no answers to fundamental questions like these. It fails to solve the problem of diversity, identifying numbers with individuals. The society of related groups is more possible than it has ever been before because of the nature of modern industry. When the domestic system of manufacture prevailed men worked by themselves and for themselves, the problem of government did not enter into industry at all; now it has to be solved by industry as in politics; in both we can attain to freedom only by the same means—the group system. The more groups to which the individual belongs the better, for they bring forth his multiple sides. No one group suffices because of his many-sided nature. At present in

our larger industries we see despotisms tempered by herd politics and a perpetual and increasing conflict between the despots, that is, the employers and the herd, that is, the workmen or wage-earners. No solution is to be found, she contends, either in absolute untempered despotism or in herd supremacy, which would take the form of State Socialism, and would mean the supremacy of certain individuals who would not carry out the non-existent herd will. The only promise of a solution is in the group system applied to industry as to government and all other activities, sacred as well as secular, that men must carry on in common; and the group system applied to industry, applied, that is, to the most necessary of all human activities, would teach us to apply it to other activities. The grave evil and incongruity of our present society is that, while we have by this means or that aimed at political democracy, we have not hitherto aimed at economic democracy; and we miss political freedom because we have not economic freedom. Further, in our very dreams of economic democracy we see it after the pattern of that political democracy which has not quite fulfilled its aims. State Socialism is only the representative system applied to industry; and it would not give us economic, any more than it has given us political democracy. Our need is to find the right and natural means to democracy in industry, and then to apply that to politics. Economic democracy will teach us how to be political democrats; we shall never learn how to be economic democrats from a political democracy that has in large measure failed.

One way or another our present system of industry and government does not stand where it did. It seems as if each is breaking down, because each is at variance with the other. Each is discredited because it does not mould the other, and is discredited by all classes. Miss Follett seeks a remedy willed and planned, not by a blind catastrophe; and her remedy is based on our suddenly growing knowledge of human nature. What we need to be aware of, and consciously to achieve, is "the will to will the common will." Foch was all will. *Vaincre, c'est vouloir vaincre*, he used to say. He certainly proved it. Let us imitate Foch with the fullest measure of our capacity. In "the will to will the common will" is the essence of Miss Follett's doctrine, for it implies that we have not yet found the common will, and must aim at finding it by a certain technique which is yet to be developed, the technique of the group. She seeks, to take an example, not to socialise property, but to achieve true Socialism by the socialisation of the common will. Up to now the study of democracy has been based on the study of institutions. Should it not be based on how men behave together? How do they behave in any group of any activity when engaged in the task of finding their common will? The proper aim of a committee is not to delegate its powers to one masterful member nor to reach a compromise in which all will forgo some part of their purpose, but to attain a new purpose, richer, wiser, and stronger than any purpose of any individual member; and that is, or should be, the aim of all government; only so can we achieve a real democracy. Naturally she asks for a leader, not a master

or a driver, one who will evolve the collective will out of the chaos of varied personality and complex circumstance.

Miss Follett protests now and then that she is not a mystic, but she is one all the same. Her doctrine, that the common will, and with it the self, is yet to be found, is mystical even though psychology confirms it. Our great hope now is in the fact that psychology does confirm this doctrine, that it is at last on the side of the angels. It offers Christianity a new technique and so a new life; it gives us faith in the to-be-realised kindness of the universe. Never did the old saying that God helps those who help themselves seem so true, because we are discovering as a fact that we can help ourselves, only by helping each other. Yet this help of each other is not the self-abnegation, the service, that it used to seem, say, in the eyes of St. Francis of Assisi. There is no longer the old opposition of altruism and egotism, because the self does not exist. The egotist is one who thinks he has found himself when he has not. The mere altruist is one who dislikes the self which he thinks he has found. When once we grasp the fact that we can only find ourselves together, and that we must learn the necessary technique together, then we shall know what Keats meant when he said that this world is not a vale of tears but a vale of soul-making.

### (II) *Community and Civilisation*

At the Oxford Conference on Church, Community, and State, 1937, Mr. J. H. Oldham had not read Miss Follett's arresting volume. Nevertheless, the identity of his thought with hers is singularly striking. He argues that the German claims single-hearted devotion to the national community in its wholeness and to the historical soul that inspires its life. The Christian must set out something more than a subjective ideal which has often contented him. He must offer an objective reality in the life of Christ in the community. For history demonstrates the vital necessity of a central reality which gives to the historical life of man a commanding meaning. Men have surrendered themselves to various competing ends: there must be one completing end. This end is no less than the supreme, decisive reality of the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ. It maintains that the ultimate reality in human life is personal fellowship, rooted in God's love for man, and that human life finds its meaning and fulfilment in relations of love and service.

Mr. Oldham rightly claims that it is only in the relationship of love that the problem of the individual and the community can find its solution. Where love is lacking, the individual is sacrificed to the community or the community to the individual. The end is an anarchic individualism or the Totalitarian State. He discerns that only in the free and glad surrender of the self to God who loves us and whom we love in turn with our whole hearts, and whose service is accordingly perfect freedom, is a solution found of the problem of freedom and

No one is better aware than Mr. Oldham of the fact that the reality of the community has been lost. How are we to set about the task of recovering it? For masses of men science has rendered the world a place where they are as terrified as Pascal was, and are horrified, as well as terrified, by the advent of the atomic bomb. The world is a frightening place because love has departed from it, and has been replaced by war and all that war, with its attendant horrors, means. "The question of paramount importance," concludes Mr. Oldham, "therefore, for the future of civilisation is whether the Church to-day possesses an inner vitality to create small communities possessing a genuine social life, bound together in mutual support and service, and dedicated to promoting the good of the community as a whole. Such groups would be the living germs of a new social consciousness and the creators of a true community life." In moving words he pleads that "there is urgent need for the working out on fresh lines of a Christian theology and Christian ethics related to the needs and tasks of the present day. It is no less important that individuals and groups should set to work where they are, and ask themselves what their Christian faith demands in the circumstances in which they have to live and act. What is wanted more than anything else is a rapidly increasing number of "cells," or small groups of people who are feeling their way to the discovery of the Christian witness and action that are called for in the present state of society. It is to a multitude of such experiments, prompted and guided by the Holy Spirit, and undertaken in the spirit of Christian adventure and in a deep and growing awareness of the realities of the present crisis, that we must look for a vitalising and renewal of the life of the Church."

Many men want the old dogmas; the more the merrier, and the older the better. They want unchanged truth: they forget that the aspects of it are always altering. The old dogmas are booms and buoys marking the fairway into the harbour of truth. Sometimes the old way is silted up. For some it is better to leave the marks where they have always been: for others there is an endless chase after a new channel, at the mercy, no doubt, of the mean intelligence of a Board of Pilots or a group. Deep down in the nature of man lies the passion for truth with all its changing aspects, the *cacoethes veritas*. No doubt this world would be a happier place if there was no brain searching in it, if we all acquiesced in the old ways. By a caprice of the Creator all men are not made, in Europe or in America—in spite of the Declaration of Independence—to seek happiness; there is always a little band of men afflicted with this craving for truth, burning with a morbid curiosity which impels them to pursue wherever it leads. It is not in the search of happiness that men seek to find the truth for their generation; they are not so much drawn forward by Sirens as hounded by Furies. The sacrifice which their passion exacts from them has the spirit of the Christian self seeking not its own. No doubt the Victorian optimism which held that our civilisation was started upon an evolution bound to carry men onwards indefinitely by, as it were, an automatic law of



progress has been sapped by more critical thought. There seems no reason in science, and no reason in religion, why things on this planet should go on improving, why they should not come to a standstill or deteriorate. But this much we can say—that our modern world may have hope. If we *will* to make this world better, to bring human life nearer the ideal of the Christian life, there is no reason why the task should seem insuperable. Not an automatic law of evolution or of progress, but the sustained purpose of human wills.

\* The pessimist may ask, Will our rationalistic civilisation come to grief in its modern European and American phase, as it did in its first Greco-Roman phase, and revive after a period of barbarism for a third advance, and so on? Or, was the setback of the Middle Ages something not to recur, a catastrophe which could overtake rationalistic civilisation only in its first immature phase?

The complex of interests which are the driving forces of our modern civilisation contain much else besides the desire and fear which Epictetus bids us cast out. The base desire is no doubt there—the desire for riches, for pleasure, for prestige; the base fear—the fear of other men's power to take away external goods, the fear of men's opinions—but even to the building up of our great industrial and commercial system of organised work there have gone nobler notions as well as the herd instinct on which Miss Follett dilates. How much, for instance, of the command over the realm of matter, characteristic of modern industrial enterprise, is due to the pure scientific interest of individual investigators, the interest which is the pursuit of truth, subjection of spirit to the universal law, asceticism which suppresses every impulse that might interfere with dispassionate verification? It is an obvious confusion of thought to call modern civilisation materialistic because it is preoccupied with great material masses. It is a creation of the human spirit, akin to the spirit of religion. Every faculty of the spirit has gone to the creation of it—desire, imagination, character, will. Because, in creating it, the human spirit has been largely engrossed with acquiring command over matter, it has in many persons lost the sense of other things, it has become concentrated upon some lower end, it has worked for commercial gain, or power for power's sake. Yet it may be questioned whether our modern civilisation could go on at all—still more whether it could continue to advance in knowledge—unless there were intermingled with its governing interests those which belong to the human spirit at its highest, those which seek to acquire command over matter only in order that they may employ it for spiritual ends. Our modern civilisation has enormously increased the content and the potentialities of life, and, like all increase of resources and power, has made it harder to enter the Kingdom of God; yet because the problem set the soul is more complex, because its solution is harder to attain than the simple detachment of Epictetus or an eastern sage, it yields, if attained, a richer result, a result richer still when the groups set to work and garner their economic and spiritual experience.

(12) *The Century of Hope*

If one of the prophets of the nineteenth century were to return now to earth, such as Macaulay or J. S. Mill, not to speak of Goethe or Comte, and were confronted by one of the satirists or reactionaries, say Pobiedonosteff or Carlyle or Maistre, there can be little doubt who would consider that he had the best of it. The average man of the nineteenth century was, in George Eliot's phrase, "a scientific meliorist." He hoped first for a cessation of wars among civilised peoples. He would find himself mistaken. He hoped for a spread of internationalism, of good feeling and understanding between nation and nation. He would find an intensity of evil passions such as he had never dreamed of. He took for granted a general increase of wealth, and especially of well-distributed wealth, raising the poor to comfort and independence. He would find reigning over much of Europe, among highly civilised peoples accustomed to every refinement of culture and comfort, a degree of poverty and starvation that he had before only heard of in stories in some famine-stricken region of the east. He hoped greatly and with peculiar confidence in the steady improvement of public health by the advance of medical knowledge. He would find high death rates, the revival of hunger fever and black typhus, and hideous diseases of beasts spreading to human beings. He might hear, what had not been heard for countless ages of history, the hyæna howling in south-eastern Europe, drawn from far off by the infinite abundance of the dead. So much for health and prosperity. Religion and morals? He would meet with ambiguous and nervous answers. Toleration? He would see in three great countries, Russia, Germany, and Italy, persecution on a scale hitherto unknown in the pages of history. Education? He would hear of soaring hopes for the future combined with depressing figures in the present, an increase of ignorance in children, an utter dearth of men teachers. Realising that he stood in the presence of a great disaster, he would ask perhaps if the peril had called forth the social spirit necessary to meet it, the firmness and coolness, the concord between classes, the warm loyalty in each people to the leaders of the nation. He would find European Powers in different degrees of civil war and dissolution, and almost all the leading nations seriously considering possibilities of social strife which the nineteenth century would have looked upon as fantastic dreams.

The nineteenth century was without doubt a century of hope. The hopes were strongest at the beginning under the influence of eighteenth-century philosophy and the French Revolution, when faith in the perfectibility of man on the inside met with the crusade for liberty, equality, and fraternity on the outside, and made that famous dawn in which it was joy to be alive. And the hope penetrated into men's blood and brain, and produced an outcrop of genius and beauty which perhaps outweighs in volume and value the fruits of any other period. And though the hopes of Godwin and Shelley, of Wordsworth and Southey,

were not realised in all the forms in which they expressed them, the century did surpass all hope by its achievement in other ways. Its second period of creative thought is still characteristically hopeful, though less lyrical and more soberly based on reason. Darwin and Mill, Tennyson and Browning, Dickens and Thackeray, all have the forward glance and the deep certitude that man is the master of his own future.

They had the hope, no doubt, because the facts around them seemed to move that way, and because they realised they had the will to make the facts move. It was a wonderful time, and perhaps more in England than France or Germany or even the United States, allowing for the outlook of Walt Whitman. Men were generous because they were rich, and because they were generous they were trusted and became richer. They were safe, and therefore they cast away fear and all the innumerable suspicions and basenesses and cruelties that spring from fear; and because they thought no evil, evil attacked them the less. In one department after another of human life the men of the nineteenth century made things better. They advanced both in high things and low, in imaginative creation, in philosophy, in scientific research. They made the law more merciful and more effective; they utterly dwarfed all human records in the depth and abundance of their works of charity to the unfortunate; they increased the power, the wages, and the education of the working classes, and eventually accepted them into full co-operation in public affairs. In lower matters, such as the increase of wealth and mechanical invention, means of locomotion and manufacture, and the like, their history reads like a fairy tale. They changed the face of the earth more than it had been changed in two thousand years before. And, amid all this solid achievement, they were not on the whole a self-complacent generation. They loved the prophets of righteousness who scourged them and the satirists who mocked at them. And anything damaging that could be said about England or the English Government was generally sure to be said by an Englishman. Careless they were, and sometimes blind and easy-going in face of the strangling complexities of the Industrial Revolution; but not on the whole, as ages go, easy-going with themselves. The moving force of the time was a sort of Puritanism controlled by common sense, an unconscious idealism carried into almost all the relations of life; a moral earnestness so strong and pervasive that Frenchmen thought it must be hypocrisy, and modern men, like Lytton Strachey, thought it must be ridiculous. As a matter of fact it was neither; many an ancient philosopher, like Zeno, would have understood it, and perhaps a medieval saint like Francis.

Their influence on other nations was immense. The English of the nineteenth century made modern Liberalism and largely shaped the course of the western world. And, one exclaims in 1946, This is what they have made of it!

What is it that has gone wrong? Or, to put the question in another form, How is a man who accepts the ideals of the nineteenth century to place our present disaster in his general scheme of the world? He believes, let us say, in the increase of knowledge, of freedom, of conquest

of things by man, of brotherhood both in the nations and between the nations; he believes both that these things have increased, and that their increase is good. And at the beginning of the twentieth century, looking back to one which most triumphantly believed in them and achieved them, comes this!

(13) *The Collision of Power States and Welfare States*

Can we say that both the World Wars were a mere accident, a disaster which carries with it no more condemnation of modern civilisation than would, say, the collision of the earth with a blind star? That view is clearly untenable; for the causes of the war are all rooted in the movements of modern civilisation. It was not the isolated act of a madman. It was the result—we need not, of course, say the necessary or inevitable result—but it was a natural and quite explicable result of the great movements of the great century of hope. The growth of democracy, of the national spirit, of colonial expansion, of education and the means of controlling education, of scientific discovery and the application of discoveries, even the breakdown of local barriers and of outworn superstitions, all these good things have had their share in bringing about the two greatest disasters that have ever befallen civilised mankind. Such a conclusion would no doubt delight Pobiedonosteff and the black bodyguard of reaction in Russia, Germany, and Italy. They always told us that liberty and education and the like were simply bad things, and not good; that J. S. Mill and Garibaldi were both wicked men, and that the right road for mankind was simply to repent of all modern history and return to the Middle Ages. And now, they say, the event proves it. Yet they would be wrong, and we all know in our hearts they would be wrong. What the reformer sees in the present or dreams of the past may do more to determine the future than any literal truth.

The fallacy lies in supposing that history has come to an end with our present miseries, or will ever at any one point come to an end. We do not know what the future will be, but there will be some future. The wars of 1914-18 and of 1939-45 were vast interruptions, explosions of pent-up forces which could no longer endure the main movement of the century of hope. It is still possible of course that the interruptions may prove fatal; that modern civilisation is broken; and that the old liberal and humane spirit will never return. It is still possible; and it depends on the most uncertain of all conditions, the way in which great numbers of human beings behave in Russia, England and the United States. Will it be possible, for instance, to introduce the group spirit in industry and then in politics? Will it be possible to introduce the community spirit in religion?

If one looks to the future of the interruptions a different view suggests itself. For one thing the Wars, as Professor A. F. Pollard has pointed out, arose not from the increase of the divergence in Europe, but from

the growing unity of Europe, just as the American Civil War arose from the growing unity of the United States. As America could not exist half slave and half free, so Europe could not continue half in the atmosphere of military autocracy by divine right and half in that of western liberalism. Welfare States and Power States cannot co-exist permanently. The result of their collision, if there was any result at all, was bound to be either a ratification or a condemnation of the main movements of western civilisation, a yes or no. And it was, as a matter of fact, yes. The principle which opposed the movement tried with all its might to arrest and reverse it; it put forth enormous power, both of material organisation and of moral will; it put forth more force than any human being had anticipated or thought conceivable. And it failed in the past, as it will fail in the future. The century of hope, with its faith and its doctrines, sacred and secular, its inspirations and inconsistencies and encumbrances, stood absolutely victorious. Civilisation may bleed to death from its wounds, as its enemy in his old guise bled to death, but, if it survives, it still shows us the way. Christianity presses us to march forward and not back. The things which we thought good have proved to be good.

Like Boswell's friend, one tries to be a philosopher, but cheerfulness will break in. There are doubtless fallacies involved in the hope which was characteristic of the last century. One of the greatest of them is worth facing frankly. It is that, granted the reality of human progress and of the much vaster process of biological evolution; granted that man has arisen from something infra-human, and that the same process will presumably continue; still this process cannot correctly be described in terms of good or evil, of praise or blame. A movement from "an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite coherent heterogeneity" is, in itself, neither good nor bad. It may quite well be good in one part and bad in another, just as a continuous curve may at one time be going up and at another time down. At any moment the next step in the process may be just the step too much; the art may become too complex, as in the fourth century, the population may increase too fast, the rise in wages may be too high. These things have happened and will happen.

The hope may be imperfectly grounded, yet it is not the mere high spirits and the froth of triumph which the optimist feels. The hope in itself is one of the grounds of hope; for the hope implies courage and faith in one another as well as in the unseen, and these themselves are great elements making for the attainment of the hope. Another ground is the actual increase of man's power over matter. If man's will is right in industry as in democracy, in religion as in these, if most men in most places prefer the good to the bad, we are not likely to fail from mere lack of power or faith in our own destinies. And another ground, we may surely venture to believe, is the discovery that, when challenged and tried by fire, the faith and the practice with which we western democracies entered the war have, after frightful battering and temporary defeat, on the whole held good after 1945, as after 1919; and

have thereby approved and reinforced the main upward stream of the nineteenth century. Two World Wars disturb this conclusion, but do they completely upset it?

(14) *The Comity of Nations*

The pessimist may ask questions. If the barbarians from without smashed the Roman Empire in the fourth century, will not our barbarians from within smash our civilisation? Is there a risk of a relapse into universal barbarism? The growing luxury of life, the growing elaboration of comfort, the complex existence of great cities, the credulous appetite for the occult, and the craving for religious sensation mark our generation as they marked the fourth century. In turn we may ask, Is there any real analogy between our times and those which preceded the fall of Rome? Does history repeat itself? We submit that one vast difference between the Greco-Roman world and ours lies in the immensely vaster resources at our command. Science enables man to utilise forces which put bodily strength and barbaric courage at a hopeless disadvantage. The Roman legionaries and the German tribesmen, both of them fighting with spears and swords, met on reasonably equal terms. Cæsar had neither long-range guns nor atomic bombs at his disposal. Another vast difference is that what used to be western civilisation covers the whole world. Ancient civilisation covered certain tracts around the Mediterranean, and without stood the unknown, unexplored region of the barbarians. Nor is it amiss to remind ourselves that Greco-Roman civilisation always lived under the shadow of barbarian menace. No Empire has ever been subjected to such a strain as that which the Roman endured for century after century at the hands of the barbarians. Rome lost her wonderful power of assimilation when confronted with the Germanic hordes. If the Asiatic and African races ever prove formidable, say, to the English-speaking peoples, they will become so with weapons forged by ourselves. The victory of Japan over Russia was the victory of an Asiatic race over a European: it was also the triumph of western civilisation. The pessimist occupies far stronger ground when he insinuates that the danger from barbarians devoid of all ethical scruples lies within. For there may well be a race which prides itself on power, pomp, and propaganda. A group of men, strengthened by the concentration of all mechanical means in their hands, with super-atomic bombs under their control, might dominate a country, a continent, even the world. Scientific methods of transport have unified the globe as it never has been unified before. There might conceivably be a group founded on unscrupulous power, and who can measure the boundless possibilities open to such a group?

We no longer see the desert of life illumined by the mirage of the golden age on the horizon; we no longer draw up the chart of the City of the Future and oil the hinges of its jasper gates. For the builders of Paradise at last realise that one man's meat is another man's poison.

Fourier, for instance, considered variety, constant employment, and promiscuity as elements in happiness; but there are those who love nothing so well as monotony, solitude, and leisure—divine trio, out of which issue great thoughts, combined ideas, deep and instinctive memories, even as bees issue from and hover about their quiet hives. The man in the street is wise who has summed up rightly that it is impossible to make a man happy by any measure enacted by Parliament or Congress. The same shoe will never fit Constantine and Augustine, Machiavelli and Luther, Talleyrand and A. Hamilton, Hitler or Mussolini. Talk about the spread of Socialism as much as we please, the world, in its higher life at any rate, markedly grows more and more individualist.

It takes the ideal, to blow a hair's breadth off  
The dust of the actual—Ah, your Fouriers failed,  
Because not poets enough to understand  
That life develops from within.

The paradises of the future, as they are before the eyes of Fourier and Anatole France, Daniel Halévy and Zola, H. G. Wells and Aldous Huxley, appear as the product of Socialism combined with mechanical science. But there are other reformers who hold with Mrs. Browning that "life develops from within," and in whose eyes the City of the Future owes its chance of existence less to a change of government, or a development of industry, than to a change of heart. After all, our feelings no less than our sciences are conquests and acquirements; they enlarge and modify not only our private life, but our conception of society and our ideal of happiness.

If a time ever comes when the group conception of Miss Follett and the community conception of Mr. Oldham prevail, solidarity will come into its own as it never has done before. By solidarity we mean the gradual growth of that sense of being all in the same body, that feeling of social debt, contracted by the mere fact of our birth into an organic society—a debt contracted by our fathers, but payable only to our brothers or our children, payable too in Church as well as in State. The danger of so generous a sentiment is the sacrifice of individual freedom to the State or the Church. M. Eugène d'Eichthal puts it in a fine metaphor, *La glace qui emprisonne et paralyse les eaux vives est aussi une solidarité*. The Church is not merely a community of worship: it is a perfect community of life, what Luther called *communicatio omnium bonorum*. By his humanitarian passion for social revolution Péguy came back to the religious faith of his youth. Yet he abstained from baptism and communion because, unlike Bunyan's individualistic Christian, he could not bear to enter the pathway of salvation without his wife and children. In the light of such an experience and the collective experience of the Church, the theory of the "divine humanity," developed by Soloviev and Berdyaev along lines suggested by Dostoevsky, makes a great appeal to our generation. There is, from this angle of approach,

an eternal humanity in the nature of God and an eternal divinity in the nature of man.

There is but one enduring principle for the construction of human ties, and it is that which proceeds from within outwards, for life can only develop from within. The wider the circle goes, the more apparent is this truth. We belong first to God, then to ourselves, to our family, to the group as Miss Follett and Mr. Oldham imagine it, then to our city, our county, our country, and finally to the world. And yet conversely each time we enlarge the circle we enrich the content of the inner rings. There could be no perfection of individual development until individuals were grouped in a common relation to a sovereign society; and it is the same where nations are concerned. Talk of the sovereignty of national rights is mere obscurantism, bandied about by persons who call themselves realists, and who have in fact never conceived the nation as a spiritual entity at all. The first true recognition of national rights, national being, national welfare, of the very essence and meaning of nationality can only dawn upon the world when nations recognise one another as members of a divine society whose law they constitute together and bind themselves to obey. There can be no humanity except through nationality; but our thought of what a nation's life may become is as yet dim because we have never perfectly respected it. Nations will begin truly to live when their relative physical strength and stature is of no more importance in the eyes of the world than that of individual men now. They will truly live when their moral strength is what vitally matters.

We paraphrase the *obiter dictum* of Louis XIV and thank him for it. The State, We Are It. Our State is one founded on the conception of duty, not of right or rights. In such a State, as Milton put it, we "place every one his private welfare and happiness in the public peace, liberty and safety." In the striking words of Schelling, "man can only give *himself* to his creatures as he gives a *self* to them, and with it the capacity of participating in his own life." The wise man lives by the laws of a city in the heavens which is not and cannot be realised anywhere on earth—a city which, in Tennyson's language,

is built  
To music, therefore never built at all,  
And therefore built for ever.



# INDEX

## A

- Acton, Lord, quoted, 81, 92, 115, 197, 218  
 American Independence—  
   The war of, three stages, 107  
   The Crown *v.* Parliament, 108-15  
 Aristotle—  
   A self-sufficing State, 12  
   The development of individuality, 13  
   An organised being, 14  
   State unity, 15  
   The new individualism, 16  
   A practical idealist, 17  
   Stasis, 18  
   Lawlessness, 19  
   Slavery an institution, 20  
   Scientific bent, 21  
   No delegation of powers, 22  
   The unity of legality and morality, 23  
   Inequality of human nature, 24  
   The recovery of his power, 60-1  
   Blindness, 85  
   No progress, 91  
   The family, 127  
   The State prior, 152  
   Quoted, 173-4  
   The right life, 222  
   His harvest, 223, 228  
   The political animal, 232

## B

- Barbarians, The German, 50-3, 254  
 Burke, Edmund—  
   Quoted, 12, 79, 201, 221, 235  
   A great conservative, 150  
   The political man, 230  
   The authority of conscience, 234  
 Bury, John Bagnell, quoted, 24, 25, 35, 49

## C

- Carlyle, Thomas—  
   Quoted, 99-100, 169, 250  
   The two Carlyles, 123  
 Christianity—  
   Its designs, 29  
   The place of Christ, 30-2  
   Its passiveness, 32  
   Universal allegiance, 36  
   Message of hope, 37  
   Political quietism, 38-9  
   Its success, 40  
   Its mechanisation, 41-2  
   St. Francis the saviour of Christianity, 71

## Christianity—

- Nietzsche's contempt, 8  
 Machiavelli's attitude, 90  
 Nietzsche's attitude, 161, 166-9  
 The State religion, 224  
 The overwhelming value of the soul of each individual, 225  
 Too individualistic, 239-40  
 Church, The—  
   Fails to succour civilisation, 53  
   The right divine, 102  
   The City-State, 128  
   Absorption by the State, 152-3  
   A completing divinity, 221  
   St. Augustine, 225-6  
   A mint of moral values, 236  
   The greatest of Corporations, 237  
   A free community, 237  
   The free State and the free Church, 239-40  
   The insistent claims of social service, 240  
 Contract, The Social—  
   Of Glaucon, 14  
   Of Lycophron, 14  
   Of the American Fathers, 114-5  
   Of Rousseau, 123-30, 134  
   Of Kant, 133-7  
   Of Fichte, 137-45  
   Its sacredness, 227  
   Of Calvin, 228  
   Of Hooker, 228-9  
   Its widespread power, 229, 231  
   Of Hobbes, 230  
   Of Spinoza, 230  
   Of Locke, 230  
   Its individualism, 233  
 Creighton, Mandell, quoted, 78, 81-2, 189

## D

## Dictatorship—

- Roman, 26, 44-5, 48  
 European, 79-80  
 Cæsarism, 126-7  
 Of Fichte, 144  
 Megara, 160  
 Of Hitler, Chapter viii, 195  
 Dominico, St., his ideals, 62, 65

## E

- Empire, The Roman, Chapter ii *passim*  
 Equality—  
   The, of Cicero, 24, 126  
   In U.S.A., 96

## Equality—

- In France, 96
- The Declaration of Independence, 110
- The American Fathers, 113
- Of Rousseau, 123-4
- Of Hegel, 152
- Of Nietzsche, 156
- The French Revolution, 176
- The Christian refusal to recognise equality, 224-5

## F

## Fichte, Johann Gottlieb—

- Powerful influence, 132-3
- The two Fichtes, 138
- Morality *v* politics, 139, 140
- Progressive history, 140
- The subjection of the citizen, 140-1
- The Social Contract, 141
- Loses the man in the citizen, 142
- The evolutionary beatitude, 142
- The right to break a contract, 143
- Historical epochs, 144-5
- God in history, 145
- Influences Hitler, 189
- The failure of the Holy Alliance, 214

## Follett, Miss M. P.—

- Her "*New State*," 241-7
- The achievement of the individual, 242
- Her attitude to the common will, 242-7
- A related society of groups, 243-4
- Hostility to Pluralism, 245
- The behaviour of men, 246
- A mystic, 247
- The group conception, 254, 256

## Francis, St., of Assisi—

- His sense of humility, 62
- Imitatio Christi*, 63
- Simple-minded, 64
- A bold venturer, 65
- His work for humanity, 66
- The "*Fioretti*," 67
- The individual and the Order, 68-9
- The world his parish, 69
- The Tertiaries, 69
- Lay religion, 70-1
- The Saviour of Christianity, 71
- His failure, 72

## G

Gibbon, Edward, quoted, 27, 41, 51

## H

## Hegel, Georg Friedrich—

- Quoted, 75
- His powerful influence, 132-3

## Hegel, Georg Friedrich—

- His remoteness, 137
  - History progressive, 140
  - The natural organism, 141
  - The two Hegels, 145
  - Order and liberty, 145-6
  - A spiritual idea, 146-7
  - His background, 147
  - An historical survey, 147-9
  - The ordered hierarchy, 149
  - The State an organism, 150
  - The social pyramid, 151
  - The essence of the modern State, 152
  - The Hegelian process, 153, 180-1
  - The hierarchical distribution of classes, 162
  - Influences Marx, 180-1
  - Influences Hitler, 189
  - Influences the present German generation, 197
  - War the sole arbitrator, 213
  - The two worlds, 213
  - The failure of the Holy Alliance, 214
  - The real is the rational, 216
  - On the side of Ethos, 217, 220
  - The historical past, 234
  - The formation of the State, 234-5
- Heine, Heinrich, quoted, 88, 133, 138, 154, 174, 190
- Hitler, Adolf—
- Follows Nietzsche, 172
  - Jewish Bolshevism, 185-6
  - His career, 186-9
  - The enforced unity, 196-7
  - The unitary State, 198, 200-1
  - His unteachable nature, 202
  - Erects a statue to Dollfuss's murderers, 205
  - The pupil of Bismarck, 216
  - Forgets formal correctness, 217
  - Blood and iron policy, 218
  - Unable to recognise true to greatness, 241
  - An average man raised the nth degree, 255
- Hobbes, Thomas—
- Quoted, 88, 90, 171, 206, 215, 220, 232
  - Influences Rousseau, 122
  - The state of nature, 123
  - Natural law, 124
  - The break with the past, 125
  - Banishes morality, 139
  - The labour theory of value, 181
  - Might is right, 216
  - The great Leviathan, 218
  - The Contract theory, 230

## I

## Individualism—

- Greek, 16-8, 60
- Roman, 35, 45, 58, 60, 82, 130
- Christian, 32, 35
- St. Augustine, 37

## Individualism—

- Of Gierke, 98
- Benedictine, 58
- Academic, 61-2
- Franciscan, 68-70
- The Reformation, 80
- Its new form, 80-1
- Its danger, 81
- Business and religion, 84
- Of Luther, 95-8, 226
- The conflict of authorities, 108
- Rampant in the Thirteen Colonies, 108-10, 112
- Individualistic revolutions, 111
- The American Fathers, 113-4
- Rousseau the renewer of individualism, 118
- Rousseau its determined foe, 120
- His influence, 123
- Of Locke, 126
- The Trust conception, 131
- Its evil aspect, 132
- The bound individual, 136
- Of Fichte, 138-141
- Of Hegel, 146, 149, 150, 152
- Of Kant, 153
- Of Nietzsche, 156, 161-3
- The economic individual, 182
- Of Sidgwick, 218-9
- Of Green, 219-20
- Of Aristotle, 222
- Of Plato, 222
- Of Berdyaev, 225
- Of the Renaissance, 226
- Of the Reformation, 226, 227, 233
- The Contract theory, 227-8, 229-30, 231
- Individualistic weaknesses, 232, 233, 235-6
- The place of conscience, 233-4
- The corporate life, 235
- Independence, 236
- The Church, 237, 238
- The State, 238
- The free State and the free Church, 239-40
- The sense of duty, 240
- Amoralisation, 241
- The achievement of the individual, 242
- Of Oldham, 247
- Of Bunyan, 255
- Of Péguy, 255

## K

## Kant, Immanuel—

- His powerful influence, 132-3
- The Social Contract, 133-7
- His routine life, 133
- Civic freedom, 134
- Inter-State relations, 135
- Duty and right, 136
- Perpetual peace, 137-8
- The avoidance of war, 141
- A spiritual idea, 146-7

## Kant, Immanuel—

- Contrasted with Hegel, 147, 148, 149
- Influences Hitler, 189
- Influences the present German generation, 197
- The failure of the Holy Alliance, 214
- The authority of conscience, 234

## L

## Laity, The priesthood of the, 84, 95, 96-7

## Law—

- Its philosophy, 19
- The attitude of Aristotle, 22
- Its supremacy, 22-3
- The power of Roman law, 38, 42-4, 53-7, 99, 107-8, 131, 132, 223, 230, 238
- Canon law, 55-9, 96
- Of Hegel, 151
- Of Germany, 200
- The Contract theory, 229

## Lawgiver—

- The Greek, 22
- Rousseau's, 122-3, 126, 143

Leviathan or the Great Leviathan, *see* "The State" (especially of Hobbes)

## Liberty—

- The attitude of Christianity, 38
- Of Rome, 38, 48
- Of Greece, 44, 48
- Of Luther, 96-8
- Its essential unity, 101
- Rousseau its champion, 122
- Of Fichte, 140
- Of Hegel, 146, 147-8, 152, 153
- Of Niemöller, 194
- Of Hitler, 195
- Of Acton, 197
- Liberty in Germany, 202
- The French Revolution, 213
- Rome loses its freedom, 223
- Of Christianity, 225-6
- Of Troeltsch, 225
- The Contract theory, 229-30
- Liberty *v.* licence, 233
- The free State and the free Church, 239-40

## Luther, Martin—

- The State divine, 92
- Ethical and dogmatic, 92
- Unrestrained angle of approach, 93
- His three great pamphlets, 93-4
- Sets the State free, 94
- Private judgment, 95-6
- His individualism, 96
- The Peasant Revolt, 97
- Moral freedom, 98
- The horror of revolution, 99
- The Saxon Prince, 100
- A great conservative, 101
- Quoted, 104
- His racial faith, 193
- Outlook on freedom, 194

## Luther, Martin—

- His spirit, 216
- The pre-eminence of man, 226
- Political man, 227

## M

## Machiavelli, Nicholas—

- Quoted, 62
- A scientific observer, 83
- Lack of observation, 85
- "*The Mandrake*," 86
- Revolutionises politics, 87
- His trinity, 88
- A destroyer, 89
- The place of force and fraud, 90
- No progress, 91
- Still a living force, 92
- Agreement with Luther, 100
- Man's eternal oscillations, 104
- Banishes morality from politics, 139, 142, 143
- Sees Italy a prey to despots, 146
- "*The Prince*," 206-9
- Supplants Grotius's book, 211, 213, 216
- Influences Treitschke, 217
- A grim realist, 220
- The Prince's authority, 226
- Life's problems too complex for him, 242

## Man, Great, The problem of the, 105, 173-4

## Marx, Karl—

- His uniqueness, 177
- The two Marxes, 177-8
- His oracular style, 177
- Marxian religion, 179-80
- The Hegelian process, 180-1
- The power of Darwinism, 181
- His falsifications, 182

## Mommson, Theodore—

- Quoted, 23, 27, 41, 172
- Influences the present German generation, 197

## Montesquieu, Louis de Secondat, Baron—

- On slavery, 20
- Influences Rousseau, 122-4, 127
- Quoted, 146, 151

Morality, *see* "Public v. Private Morality"

## More, Sir Thomas—

- His "*Utopia*," 14, 82-3, 206-7
- Quoted, 76
- His outlook, 82-3
- His attitude to toleration, 99
- Security v. Liberty, 100-1

## Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm—

- His politics, 24
- The Superman, 85, 165, 169, 196
- His trinity, 88
- His career, 154-5

## Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm—

- The Fatherland, 155-6
- His love of strength, 157
- The army an admirable school, 158
- Master and herd morality, 159, 167
- The will to power, 160, 164
- Christianity condemned, 166-7
- The denial of life, 168-9
- The transvaluation of values, 169, 219
- The Gospels life-denying, 170-1
- European anarchy, 171
- His background, 172
- Influences Hitler, 189, 190
- The uniform moulding of the will, 202
- The art of government, 207

## O

## Oldham, Joseph Houldsworth—

- The individual and the community, 247
- The small community, 248
- The group conception, 256

## P

## Pascal, Blaise, quoted, 63, 92-3, 103-4

## Persecution—

- The attitude of Plato, 15
- Of St. Augustine, 37
- Of Luther, 98-9
- Of the Reformation, 102
- Of Rousseau, 128
- Of Russia, 129
- The treatment of the Jews, 185-6
- Nazi forms of persecution, 194
- The three persecuting countries, 250

## Plato—

- The furtherance of goodness, 12
- The service of the State, 13
- A dream City, 14
- Its unity, 15
- The sophists, 16
- The disappearance of unquestioning obedience, 17
- Communism, 18
- Slavery, 19
- A radical, 20
- A man in an aeroplane, 21
- The lawgiver, 22
- The service of the laws, 23
- The inequality of human nature, 24
- Quoted, 26-7, 112
- Influences Rousseau, 122, 125
- The enslavement of the individual, 222
- His harvest, 223
- The help of one's neighbour, 234
- A master spirit, 239

## Printing—

- A more important invention than the occurrence of the Reformation, 76 . . .
- The censorship of books, 76

## Progress—

- A modern ideal, 102-3
- Believers and disbelievers in it, 104
- The ancients *v.* the moderns, 105
- The two types, 105-6
- The share of Descartes, 107
- The attitude of Rousseau, 122
- Of Hegel, 153\*
- A lost cause, 204
- The Victorian belief, 248-9
- Public *v.* private morality—
  - The attitude of Nietzsche, 13
  - Of the Roman Empire, 44, 204-5
  - Of Fichte, 139-41, 143
  - Of Hegel, 153
  - Chapter ix *passum*
  - Greek, 204
  - The Middle Ages, 205
  - Modern breaches between them, 205, 217-8, 220
  - Political necessity, 206
  - Machiavelli's influence, 206-9
  - Grotius's "*De Jure ac Pacis*," 209-11
  - The eighteenth century divorce, 212-3
  - The failure of the Holy Alliance, 213-4
  - The failure of the League of Nations, 214-5
  - The most immoral period, 1856-71, 215-6
  - Of Treitschke, 216-7
  - Of Sidgwick, 218-21
  - Morals *v.* politics, 241

## R

## Racialism—

- Its pedigree, 182
- Its gospel, 183
- The view of Gobineau, 183
- Of Chamberlain, 183
- Of Gunther, 183
- Of Rosenberg, 193
- Gobineau and Chamberlain, 196, 197

## Reformation, The—

- Geographical influence, 74-6
- Lack of toleration, 73, 83
- National in England, 78
- Many-sided aspects, 79-80
- Its revolutionary side, 102
- Its sense of conduct, 151
- The pre-eminence of man, 226
- Emphasis on religious labour, 227
- The value of each soul, 233

## Renan, Joseph Ernest, quoted, 34, 64

## Renaissance, The—

- Geographical outlook, 73-7
- Printing, 76
- Lack of toleration, 73
- Not the age of reason, 102
- A blind movement, 103
- The prominence of man, 226

## Romanticism, The influence of Rousseau, 120-1

## Rostovtzev, Michael I., quoted, 30, 52

## Rousseau, Jean Jacques—

- On elections, 22
- His individualism, 80-1, 117, 120, 139, 229
- The ancestry of his ideals, 92
- The man himself, 116-7
- His character, 118-9
- Motive more important than deed, 121
- The foe of civilisation, 122
- No progress, 122
- His inconsistencies, 123
- The two Rousseaus, 123
- Natural law, 124
- The Social Contract, 124, 125, 196, 127, 129, 134-5
- Its sanctions, 124-5
- His Platonism, 125
- The general will, 125, 127
- The lawgiver, 126
- Cæsarism, 126-7
- Sovereignty and government, 127
- His persecuting policy, 128
- His scheme of education, 129
- Creates an état sentimental, 130
- Influences the French Revolution, 133
- His view of property, 134
- The good will of man, 136
- Agrees with Fichte, 143
- The compulsion to be free, 145
- Admired by Hegel, 145
- Nature's Peter the Hermit, 175-6
- The failure of the Holy Alliance, 214

## S

## Sabatier, Paul, quoted, 71, 168

## Satre, Its deadly work, 77-8

## Science—

- Its marvels, 15-6
- Its great men, 173-4
- The atomic bomb, 173, 239
- Shakespeare, William, quoted, 74, 81

## Slavery—

- The attitude of Aristotle, 19-20
- Roman slavery, 34-5, 39-40, 43, 48-9
- American slavery, 110
- North *v.* South, 111-2

## Socialism—

- Its rise, 175
- The ethical view of property, 176
- Its double origin, 176-7
- The place of Marx, 177-82
- The need of Socialism, 240
- Spengler, Oswald, quoted, 28
- Spinoza, Benedict de (Baruch), quoted, 91
- State, The—

- Of Plato, 12-24
- Of Aristotle, 12-24
- The Roman State, 22, 25-8, 45-8
- The Greek, 23, 25-7
- Of Machiavelli, 84-92, 218-9
- Of Luther, 92-101

## State, The—

- Of Rousseau, 122-30
- Of Kant, 133-7, 234-5
- Of Fichte, 138-45
- Of Hegel, 145-53
- Of Nietzsche, 158, 172
- Of Hitler, 198, 200
- The Welfare State, 214-5, 221, 252
- The Power State, 214-5, 252
- The Autarkic State, 216, 235
- Of Treitschke, 216-7
- The Medieval angle of approach, 225-6
- The Contract theory, 227-33
- The State a living reality, 234
- Its moralisation, 235-6, 237
- The diffusion of the State its essence, 236
- The sovereignty of the people, 239
- Its freedom, 239
- Its amoralisation, 241

## T

- Toynbee, Arnold Joseph, quoted, 48, 50
- Troeltsch, Ernst, quoted, 80, 221, 222, 225
- Trust conception—
  - The, 130
  - The legal trust, 131
  - Kant's attack on it, 134

## W

## Will The—

- The attitude of Schopenhauer, 159-60
- Nietzsche's will to power, 160, 164
- Of Nietzsche and Hitler, 202
- Of Miss Follett, 242-7
- Women, The place of 16, 18, 36, 155